

AL TO JILL APRIL 1, 1945 V-MAIL

Darling Jill,

It is Easter and I love you, today and always. It so happens that the day is brightening up, and I had a good night's sleep for a change, too, and all that helps. Of course I still do not know whether you are in Chi or SF but I trust you are reasonably resigned by now to either location. The indications are, since I haven't heard from you in two or three days that you have finally left. I therefore feel lonesome to a certain extent, as I always feel when you set about doing something that I have no part of. I think my chief ailment is lonesomeness. It isn't flagrant, but the mere fact that I have no one really close to me causes an invariably unhealthy repression. And of course you are the only confident I have. You may scoff, because in the past you have accused me of withholding confidences, of not 'spilling my guts' to put it in another fashion. However that is a relative trait and what matters is how much you mean to me in that respect rather than how much I expose myself actually. Perhaps the reason I am secretive to a certain extent of what runs through me is less a matter of selfishness and self-love, as in many secretive people, and more a matter of, firstly, the enormous quantity of unsifted material that it would take considerable effort to expose in acceptable selection and order and secondly, the fantastic nature of a lot of the contents.

I have a wealthy dream world. I contrive weird situations, ideas, relationships and complex observations. I don't know if all people are the same in that respect. They probably are to quality more than to quantity. I don't claim superiority for my fantasies. But the "thinking look" minus the constant chatter naturally lead a person to believe much that goes on inside is not revealed. Rather than to bore you to tears with further self analysis and therefore have you love less my smooth-skinned exterior, I'll stop it with one more statement which may be revealing. I've always regarded myself, though not so willing to

admit it, as a repressed problem. And as for yourself, casting aside your divine body (and catching it by legerdemain), I feel for your being a bigger problem than you've turned out to be. You can use that handy margin of safety at compound interest in your dealings with me in the future, throwing potato mashers at me, refusing to get up in the morning, refusing to wear shoes, etc, generally being your nasty little self.

Today seems to be an easy one; yesterday was tiring; tomorrow promises to be the same. What the hell, huh? The war here seems to be on its last legs. I have a physical repulsion against moving. I have the same against staying still. I loathe the Germans who have no consciousness of their crimes. But I am equally repelled by the necessity for treating men as scum, even if they are scum. It speaks too much for the devil within us. I feel that I might trust myself with any excess but know that as a social policy it might well be bad. Perhaps it is only an apology for my severity that I say I don't hate the German people, but I really believe it. I am surprised at the passivity of so many of the released PWs and workers. They behave better than they ought in respect to the civilian population. I would prefer our having to restrain them somewhat more. The Russians, particularly, seem in many cases to be deprived of all spirit; so long have they been abused and suppressed, that they are demoralized and inert. No wonder Uncle Joe promises a period of relief and rehabilitation for all his returned PWs and workers. They need it. They are some of the most amazing sights in the roads and in the cities. I have seen sights from Fantastic Stories' most lurid days. The corpses of cities, ghastly rubble piles, alone, still, with figures of men darting in and out every so often, a drunken Russian careening amid the chaos, waving a long sword at the moon.

But I must save space to say again that I love you, darling, and send a thousand kisses to you and Kathy. Al.

JILL TO AL APRIL 2, 1945 V-MAIL

Darling,

Here is Monday & I'm stiff & tired after a hectic happy weekend. We went riding again yesterday - again along the beach. Paul didn't go but stayed with Ann & I went with Lou the boarder, who wasn't a very good rider. But it was a good ride anyway - I managed to slip out with a little black mare who had been leaping around the enclosure, while they were putting an English saddle on some sad-looking nag. In the confusion of Sunday riders they didn't realize I'd gotten a good horse, fairly good, that is. Outside she wasn't so lively but had a nice mouth. But I hate Western saddles, don't you.

Then we took the kids to a lawn full of sheep and took pictures, which I hope will turn out. If they do you will probably note some of the difficulties attendant on group picture taking - the rubber legs, the distracted attention in the children, the squinting nervous adults.

In the afternoon we ate & slept & then took the kids to a cocktail party around 5, at friends who also have a 4-year-old. The kids raced around & shouted while Paul & Ann & I tried decently to get drunk. But when excitement mounted too high the wee ones were taken home. I stayed behind, relieved of my duties, & spent a busman's holiday in the kitchen teaching the Kerr's kid how to eat spaghetti rolled on a fork. (The other people were dull or awful.) Paul & Ann came back later & we stayed till about eleven, eating some very unorthodox & lousy spaghetti too. Today I have diarrhea I am rather sleepy. I never seem to drink enuf to get even mildly tight but invariably I show some symptoms of hangover the next day. Whilst in bed last night, spinning gently (the beginning of hangover) I had a good time imagining you. I think that for me it is easier to remember how things feel rather than look. In my imagination I could trace every lineament of your face & figure but when I tried to imagine

how you look, I could only evoke a rather flat image, a composite of all my favorite photographs of you. But until the day I die, I shall always remember how it feels to have you next to me in bed.

Darling, I love you.

Jill

AL TO JILL APRIL 3, 1945 V-MAIL

Jill, my Love,

As the stereotyped telegram goes, "You are more than ever in my thoughts lately," because I have been seeing your family name plastered all over the place on road signs. That makes me feel very much at home. I only wish you were so near. I haven't yet been to Oppenheim to tell you what it looks like, but the chances are that even though it is a rear area already, I will pass through it some day. I see that Lauterbach is also in our hands and may do the same there. Any more geographical locations in your family? I picked up a souvenir dagger for you yesterday and will send it on in due time. I have another which I will send to Ed and then I will look for one for Vic. Is everybody happy? Your dagger I got from a surreptitious character who sidled up to me and handed me two of them which I threw into my jeep. They are afraid to be caught with weapons. One guy gave Fred Faas a handful of Lugers and rifles in Heidelberg. Fred really should have nabbed the guy to see whether he knew where some members of the Volkssturm or Wehrmacht were hiding out in civvies, but he was in a hurry. The trouble is that everybody is in a hurry. There isn't time for anything. I would like to find the guy who had my rooms in this place before me. He is still in the neighborhood since I kicked him out and he can't go far. I had no time to search the place, but had to get out on the

road again. When I returned, I found his personal documents torn up and put in the stove, but unburned. He was an SA in 1932 and 1933 and a regular since then. There will be more time later, however. I am sure that there will be enough Germans too for a lot of housecleaning of their own, once they are organized and permitted to operate.

About the bombings, there is hardly any urban life of any consequence any more. I think Morgenthau's plan is practical if only because the stage he wants the Germans to arrive at, i.e. an agricultural nation, is practically achieved already. No superlatives can describe the completeness of the bombing. Many of the people left in the cities are mental cases or perhaps it is that only queer people can remain under the conditions. Pray, sister, that this is the last war. I am also convinced more than ever that there is nothing like a good isolated farm, providing the tactical situation doesn't come your way. Incidentally, all our spare time at this place we're in now is occupied with removing the after-effects of its habitation by a German demolition team. They left odd little knick-knacks of mines, TNT, and booby traps in all the corners. None of them were set for us, however (he said, tapping gently on wood), because they had to leave in a great hurry. Still it was with some bemusement that we stood back and watched the German occupants do a preliminary cleaning of the basement before getting out.

Comes darkness sans lumière and I love you. A big kiss to my Kathy.

Al

THE Seventh Army HQ has in mind heading through Southern Germany. He readies two vehicles to leave the company at Darmstadt and cruise the area of the fast-disappearing Front. Before he eparts, Lt. Jacques Pregre enters, neat, his fat jowls closely shaved, his brown eyes snapping, his cigarette dangling. Let's move to Ulm, says the

Captain, come along. No, says the Lieutenant, the French First Army has just taken it. How can they, exclaims the Captain, it was already liberated by the Seventh Army! It makes no difference, Pregre calmly pronounces. Napoleon scored a great victory in battle at Ulm. *Entendu!* The French must now take the city again; it is their historical mission.



Trucks in Darmstadt.

The Captain, marveling without grieving, goes cruising without him and in good time comes upon a castle southeast of Augsburg. As imposing as *Wuthering Heights*, had you seen the movie. (He didn't think that way, for everything that would have let him play Hollywood to a Fare-thee-well was scratched and discolored by his limbic homesickness.) It was so fancy, so groomed of roof and garden. Untouched by war to outward appearances. Quiet. Inside, a subdued splendor in the best of taste, fifteenth to nineteenth century all-inclusive, time spiraling gently among innumerable artistries. A proper group of aristocratic Germans living as if on a long week-end. They appear to be lolling about as he enters, as if they were expecting him for tea. The Lady of the Castle lean, tall, elegant, cordial, superficially fearless. Alongside her an old man who could have been anyone, if not a Chief of Staff retired, at least a Captain of Industry: he was leaving the reception up to her; he might be asked difficult questions. A Hungarian count, who could not keep quiet: he played about her flanks like a cavalryman, which he probably was. Complete with the beautiful castle maiden; the Captain looked her up and down; they should have hid her away; how could they know he was bent upon non-fraternizing, even as he said, when he heard her speak English, "How nice, you can teach me German," and looked keenly at the old lady to catch the flash of alarm traverse her face. Meanwhile his men have

been surveying the grounds. French slave workers, Captain, fifty of them. Inform them that of course they are free to go or not as they please, and send the wagon tomorrow morning for rations. Find some place in the slave quarters for the family tomorrow. Sleep, sleep, the day has been long. Where to sleep, but in the room of the Hungarian count, who has already shown it politely. Its centerpiece is a smallish grand bed of the Sixteenth Century, canopied in silks, embroidered with dumpish nude maidens of the age floating about, seeming on the verge of precipitating themselves upon the occupant of the bed, tonight the Captain, the Count is informed and crestfallen, no cordial tale-swapping comrade-in-arms this lad. In the morning, the soldiers excitedly report a treasure discovered in the great cellars, silverplate, gilt-framed marvelous paintings, you have to see it, Captain! What is wrong with him? He says, I know what it is, the main thing now, before this place is overrun, is to report it to the Cultural Preservation Team of the Army so they can take it over and maintain guard. So far as we are concerned, men, we're moving on, except you Discoverers; you stay until the Culture guys arrive and return then to Darmstadt; we can't hold a place like this. Some General and his Staff are going to pull their rank on us. Adieu, beautiful castle, castle maiden, mama aristocrat. What was it she said while offering the hospitality of the manse: "I know *Der Führer*. He is very nice. I am certain that if you were to meet him, you would find yourself much in agreement."

The ranging party crosses the valley and comes upon a warehouse of finely bound copies of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* intended for *Bürgermeisters* to give to newly married couples. The thought of each little couple of newlyweds, beset by all the problems of a likely living hell, receiving this as their wedding gift drives the American soldiers into a fit of insane laughter. Still, it is a genuine token of the bizarre social order that the Germans have accepted without the faintest revolt. As soon as the Captain returns to camp, he calls in Lt. Little, who has recently joined the Team, and asks him to go burn the books. Lt. Little protests the order. He argues that it is morally outrageous to burn books, no matter what kind of books they are. That's what the Nazis did. That's what we are fighting against. The Captain is probably one of the few officers in the American Army who would not now be kicking him in the ass. Instead, he expresses himself as agreeing in

principle, but tells him that countless millions of copies still circulate, and unless Lt. Little will burn them, they will have to be handed out forever at weddings, or as souvenirs, or in schoolrooms or in stores, and there won't be much room for other books. Books are trashed, Lieutenant, if there is no market for them. Keep a copy for yourself; I am. And he did and so did the Lieutenant. But it was a matter of religion for the Lieutenant, and others had to set the match to the heap.

Lt. Little is a very ethical person generally. One morning, he turns himself in for failing to have awakened during the night for guard duty; the Captain soothes him and orders him to serve as Officer of the Guard for two straight weeks in consequence. He protests, asserting that he had, after all, been honest in turning himself in. I know, replies the Captain, and I respect you for it, but the offense still demands its penalty.

He goes out cruising again with his artillery old-timers Charley Wagner and Corporal Stubbs, together with now-Captain Villanave, and Blackie driving in the command car, and spots several Germans cutting across a field. He mutters to Blackie, stop quick, let's get 'em, drops off the right side, and levels his automatic rifle at the group yelling "Halt!" They do. "Hands *auf*!" They do. "*Kommt hier!*" "*Langsam.*" He has them draped over the hood like dead prey, orders the truck to start up and carries them that way as far as a blasted house on the road ahead. They turn out to be SS, which makes him think of shooting them, but he is afraid that he will be court-martialed if there are witnesses. Also they deserve to be interrogated, if only to see whether they are among the majority now being pressed into SS uniform. He is relaxing upstairs, smoking a cigarette and thinking over the issue, when Villanave comes rushing up excitedly; "Stop Sergeant Wagner, *Mon Capitaine!* He is beating the prisoners!" De Grazia wonders what the hell he is so excited about, and walks down the stairs, "What's up, Sergeant?" "That young punk had a gun concealed on him, Sir." Good reason, the Captain feels; he is wondering about Villanave, who looks cold with his thin mustache, beady black eyes; how can he be kind-hearted; he was Alsatian, joined the Resistance, when?...a sympathizer, a neutral, a pacifist, what? He finally gives the prisoners over to Corporal Stubbs to drive them to the PW compound,

offhandedly adding, "I don't care if they ever arrive safely." Stubbs gives him a quick alert glance to catch some meaning in the words. They do arrive.



Sargent Wagner.

The cruising continues. Investigate a farmhouse. Discover a young man, not really trying to hide, claims to be Jewish. He wears clothes that fit him, no weapon or uniform to be found. Marvelous if true. Ironic, if not true. The householders look like decent folk as they plead his case. It has been known to happen. Let him go. Why? Because maybe he was actually Jewish: Germans are not so unanimously Nazi as people think. If he wasn't, maybe for the rest of his life he could contemplate his good fortune at being considered a Jew.

The Captain leads his party out to the jeep. A bullet whistles past his right ear. He wheels around to the left. Connie Wilson is staring at him horrified, paling. Blackie has nearly blown his brains out uncocking his weapon. (About now, on April 6, off Okinawa, seven U.S. ships are damaged by "friendly fire" during a Kamikaze attack.) He puts him on two weeks of extra guard duty and sentences him to lessons in handling weapons. The Captain registers Connie's look forever: he doesn't want me to die. He recalls it when a promotion opens up and several close good men put up their comrade, a fine soldier, for T3. He refused to pass over Connie. They couldn't understand him. You know, Captain, he has said some bad things about you. I know, said the Captain, but here's the way I see it. He does his work well. He is off his rocker. He is full of prejudices. Still, he has been overseas more than two years, he has a wife and child at

home. It would kill him if I put him down on this one.

The next country villa they come upon looks prosperous. Search reveals nothing suspicious, nothing of interest. Leaving, notes a space without a corresponding door. Break it open, men; the Germans stand there in dismay. Inside, a great cache of liquor -- cognacs, wines, the best of brands. Everyone regards liquor as legitimate plunder, whatever you can eat and drink and employ to survive at the best level of the aborigines. German loot becomes American loot. The truck is loaded up, enough to last out the war if it is measured out appropriately and imbibed normally and the war ends soon. Each officer is issued several bottles of hard liquor and one of champagne and wine. Each enlisted man of the Team gets half a case of excellent wine. Not quite equal, but it all equalled out in the process of consumption. And "the Army is not in the business of setting up communism," as the Captain once told his men when he was altering in favor of the officers an arrangement of quarters, fixed by the first men into them. (The beneficiary was Major Roos, so he was obviously acting on principle.) "Except," he stressed, "for the sick and disabled."

There is anxiety over the possibility of last ditch resistance to be undertaken by the Nazis in the Bavarian Alps. Hitler's mountain residence at Berchtesgaden would serve as the Headquarters for an *Alpenfestung* of vast extent. The fear of another Cassino may be haunting Intelligence. An expectation prospers in the Seventh Army, at SHAEF, at home and abroad, that the Nazis will fanatically retreat into the Bavarian fastnesses, and there in the mountains, where they are believed to have constructed impenetrable defenses, will hold out for a long while. Even as the Soviets closed in on Berlin, the whereabouts of Hitler were unknown. They would remain so until the German radio itself announced his death. Meanwhile, the Allies were expecting to hear at any time that he would address the world from his "Alpine Fortress."

This was one of the great myths of the War, and one day would hardly be understood, and passed over in embarrassment, although it was not only passed along as gossip but related in one report after another to be a most realistic scenario of *Götterdämmerung*.

Interestingly, for those who would pursue manias, madnesses, myths, rumors, psychopathology, and the science of intelligence as practiced, the Germans seem to have played no more than a bit part in the enactment of this phantasmagoria. Typically, the very absence of news from within the area of this mighty *Redoubt* lent credence to the idea of a defensive system so well organized and guarded by a great many special forces that information could not be expected to leak out. A veritable "Black Hole" it was, sucking in rather than giving out intelligence and materiel.

A map of some thousand square miles of terrain showing supply dumps and artillery positions occupied wall-space at Eisenhower's Headquarters. Misinformation came from every usual source, intelligence operatives in Switzerland, the War Department, OSS, and, to the discomfiture of Captain Alfred de Grazia, his respected G-2 Chiefs of the Seventh Army, who, on March 25, imagined "an elite force, predominantly SS and mountain troops, of between 200,000 and 300,000 men," and reported the continuous arrival of supplies in the Redoubt area, including new types of artillery and a put-it-together-yourself Messerschmitt aircraft factory. There are indications that a belief in the Redoubt had some influence in the decision to hold the Seventh Army on its Southeastern course, therefore thinning the main spearheads of advance farther North, therefore helping to rationalize the decision of Eisenhower to hold the Allied forces at the line of the Elbe River, where the Soviet troops would be awaited.

As for the Captain, he could boast (not that he did) that he had ceased to consider seriously the story by March and by May was prepared to traverse the Redoubt by jeep. Which he did, as will be told.

JILL TO AL APRIL 4, 1945

Sweetheart -

I just wrote a long letter (2 pages) to Joan, my first to anybody but you & family in ages. Oh, did I tell you Monday (the last day I

wrote - & I blush for shame) that I spoke to the family on Sunday & they are all fine. I'd forgotten to send Mom anything for Easter & figured she'd rather hear my voice anyway - not for its beauty or mine but because it's symbolic of the family stuff she misses so much. Bussy had just gotten in & they found an apartment in the Kenwood Garden, now remodeled & spruced up for war worker by the NHA. Buss got certified as such & thus could move in. I am very happy we will live so close. I hope Mir feels as I do - that we can make deals for swapping the kids, giving each of us more free time perhaps.

Everybody is very tired around here today. We were out last night for many cocktails dinner & drinking with a couple of friends of Paul's who were in town for the day. However, no hangovers, *Mirabile dictu*. One of the men was a Navy medic & passed out thiamine chloride pills (yes, more pills) & it turned out to be a sure cure. But I'm sleepy today nonetheless. Paul lent his car to one of the group and he drove the kids & me all over the lot this afternoon for scenic views of everything. The weather was fine & I got my first glimpse of the Golden Gate in the sunlight. It was marvelous. A beautiful little Swedish liner or fancy cargo boat, I don't know which, was racing out & we were able to follow it from the bay until it started to grow smaller on the horizon of the ocean. It was the first ship I've seen that wasn't painted that deadly deep grey. Instead it glistened with a new coat of pearly grey, a small patch of neutrality and peace.

Everybody is very busy shining up the public buildings for the Conference, and making huge floral arrangements in the parks spelling "Welcome United Nations" (or "Hurray for Central High"). It is mildly exciting.

I haven't heard from you for nearly a week. You must be very busy storming around the Ruhr (is that where you are?) sneering, as I hope you are, at the civilian members of the master race. I pray that you are all right. You are constantly in my waking thoughts and frequently in my sleeping - when you

bob up in that half-consciousness just between waking & sleeping. Damn it, darling, I do miss you so much & I get so mad at the headlines who, tho always marvelous, are often cruel in their lack of the only news that will bring us together - peace today.

I wish I had a good typewriter. It's hard writing letters by hand, which accounts for my defections these days. But I love you anyway - and terribly at that -

Jill

JILL TO AL APRIL 6?, 1945

Darling -

I just wrote a raft of postcards for the benefit of civilian morale in Chicago but doubt if I'll ever get stamps to mail them with. My lethargy seems to mount daily - a contributing factor being that I hardly ever walk anywhere. Between the car - having it - & the tailor tot - not having it - my legs are getting as superfluous as a dinosaur's appendix, a state I don't altogether approve of.

I just finished 2 games of Russian bank with Ann. She beat me one, I beat her one. It's a silly game of chance - the one I won I made the most mistakes in. And it makes me very sleepy.

Last night we went out for dinner at a place with a beautiful view & Italian food. The latter was good but I could have lived without it, feeling very much the way you used to when I first knew you - One can get it at home, so why *[go]* out. And the ordinary run of Italian cooking - all the pastas, the scallopini, can be so easily prepared at home that it's sort of silly to track down Italian restaurants.

I got a very short letter from you today March 26, forwarded from Chicago. I hope that not much later than that you were apprised of the knowledge that we finally got here. I was awfully glad to hear from you after a week's lapse. I also got another letter from Liz today, telling that she was sending me some of your letters to Bill, if I wanted to read them & send them back. I suppose it is a form of eavesdropping on both our parts but certainly pardonable on hers. She writes so calmly and courageously - she is an incomparable girl. I'm sure she could never be described as distraught, which is what Rosable wrote. You see, J. F. Brown's sister is married to Liz's father, which was why Rosable wrote me about it at all.

I'm afraid I'm in one of those spells where I don't feel much like writing, at least, not a lot. So much & yet so little seems to be happening. It doesn't give one time to reflect and the quality of what happens isn't even worthy of reflection. And the one thing that has really shaken me up - Bill's death - well, there's just not very much one can say about it. I know it's added to the already hostile feelings I've had towards the civilian slobs in Chicago but then, I'm not in Chicago.

I have a toothache from eating too many of those little turd-like chocolate drops which should be put in cookies if one has the self-control not to eat them first. I think I'll go to bed. Please forgive me, darling, for being so inarticulate, or so lacking in ideas. The one idea I do have is that I love you & want you - I guess I can't say that too often.

All my love - Jill

P.S. The next morning. I am very sleepy because about 5 this morning Kathy woke up & put in a couple of long distance calls on her toy phone. After talking for an hour she went back to sleep. What an eccentric that child is!

AL TO JILL APRIL 6, 1945

Dear Love,

I might not have gotten around to writing this tonight, it being after ten and I being very tired, if it weren't for the fact that I received two letters from you tonight, against which there is no defense. But if the type trails off into nothingness, it is because your man has fallen backwards onto his bed and is asleep. It is with considerable astonishment that I read that you are actually in San Francisco. I never thought you would make it. But there you are, to coin a phrase, somewhat the worse for wear but full of the same old vinegar and what goes with it. Buy Kathy a dish of spaghetti in New Joe's for me. It is better than a blood test. If she hits a high C on the swoop, that's my



Jill on the Pacific Coast.

daughter. I find your descriptions of life in SF very good. I hadn't realized that there were so few sand lots strewn around the place. I'm used to the prairie cities where the city is a vacant lot surrounded by houses. Since you are going to be there a month or two, why don't you apply yourself to learning about the potentialities of the region for living and farming. I don't mean the usual generalizations, e.g. "Ah, la clime, c'est magnifique" or "O che bello solo!" Then when I come back and ask you where you want to live, you can say California and when I say "warum?" (made like a seal) you can say "For this, this and that, fifty acres with running brooks and nice neighbors, a view of the

sea and dirt that grows anything, so that I am finally overwhelmed and crush you in my arms and cover your face with kisses and pack you off to the homestead where I promptly alienate all the nice neighbors by driving them off our plot so that I can ravish you at will and alone. The winds will blow in from the sea, the weeds will grow, the machinery rust, and out of the cracked slats that serve as windows, a bearded dark face will peer and withdraw to bury itself in your bosom forever and ever. Tell me again what was the name of that song we loved that we heard together at Rosable's, the one about leaving the world, and I'll strum it on my cracked guitar and sing it to you.

But back to war and hell, you know that it is tiring just to move around like this. Back home they recommend travel for jangled nerves (now I quite believe you when you say travel just wrenches them out of their sockets or whatever nerves are plugged in on) but here the opposite effect is achieved. Setting up, pulling down, changing guards, maintaining vehicles, setting up stoves, loading trucks, unloading trucks, and then that horrible, monstrous bedding roll which is always growing thicker as I grow thinner, until some day it will carry me out to the jeep, I know. The war has lost most of its shot-and-shell character as far as I am concerned and is mostly a maneuver in space. The roads are fine and the armies are making the most of them. You ought to see a column of 6 by 6s moving at a demonic clip down the superhighways. I have as much affection for them as I would have for a troop of horses at a charge. That's the modern American for you, a nation of mechanical cavalrymen.

For some reason, the rations have been extraordinarily good the last several days. We've had three fried fresh eggs for breakfast each morning. I managed to wrap up a fine Nazi dagger and send it to our Chicago address for you. I wouldn't let Kathy pick her teeth with it, though. There's a limit to indulging her curiosity. I've found another nice one that I hope to send off tomorrow to Ed. Perhaps Paul would like one and I'll be on the lookout for one for him too.

Das ist alles. Always your pal & lover,

Al

JILL TO AL APRIL 8, 1945

Darling,

How frustrating it is to decide you are going to write a long letter to one's own true love, to have a quiet house & the dishes done as time to do it in, & then to find the typewriter on the blink through the machinations of 2 evil children. It really is a handicap not having a good machine. Without one, I find myself taking short cuts, skipping things I would or might ordinarily say. Perhaps for you this may be a blessing - my occasional exhaustiveness must really be exhausting. But some inner man drives me on with the wish to tell you all, & when I feel I have a bad (slightly) conscience. When I see how Paul & Ann crawl into bed after supper (they are out to the movies now) I look forward to that, too, as one of the blessings of peace which I've missed so far. Think of going to bed after supper, to read or play cards, & not forever to live vicariously through letters, written with inadequate tools. I guess that makes me sound a little resentful of having to write you. Well, damn it, there are better ways of living, namely to live with the person you write to.

Liz sent me some letters you'd written Bill while you were a civilian & also a record you made with Jane Hayes which I couldn't get to work anyway. Just as well, I never could abide that girl. The letters, which you are probably mad as hell at me for reading, were interesting for the rehash of your life then & Bill's. You made some oracles about the CPs which amused me, recalling the endless debates with the Kelley's until June 22, 1941. (Or was it June 6, I can't remember).

I got a letter from Vic too, saying Buss was in town for good & installed on Kenwood, & that Ed's course was over & he was waiting to see what the Army would do with him next. Vic seems to be getting a lot of band jobs these days & sounds very manly & important although his letters are still a scribble (tho who am I to talk?).

I feel awful about that typewriter, for the other reason that it belongs to Lou, the boarder who takes an awful beating anyway. He is away for a week starting today & we are all delighted. It seems he knew Paul in College & when he came to SF a year ago he looked him up. Paul couldn't ever remember who he was, but anyway they got friendly (Lou would drive them to skiing) & when Lou got a job travelling a great deal Ann said he could leave his stuff here & come stay on the odd weekends he was in town. But 2 months ago he gave up his job & has been roosting here permanently, to Paul's extreme anguish. He's a nice guy but noisily extrovert & anyway, when you run a house unattended, one more person is a burden, however inconspicuous & cooperative. Now I will sleep in his bed, away from the midnight gambols of Kathy, and there will be less orange juice to squeeze in the AM. So I too have a vested interest in Lou's departure & (I hope) delayed return, although I can't get as excited as Paul does about his hearty voice. My goodness, I can hardly hear what Paul says half the time.

We've had a nice weekend, all except Paul, who is periodically afflicted with severe pains in his arm when he is tired & the weather is damp. It's a damned shame. I wonder if all post-amputative cases suffer so, or whether the new drugs reduce the shock and infection - rather, the infection which must cause such lasting nervous damage. But he slept most of the time & last night Ann and I played a fascinating new variation called contract rummy which I really must teach you. It's much better than gin. Ann got so enthusiastic she was all for mailing instructions to you but I suggested you might not have the time & anyway might prefer poker. I have a mental picture of you

now, anyway, with hardly enough time to pick up your pants & keep up with the rest of our Armies, pursuing them thus in Groucho Marx style.

Today I left about 9 & met some friends of Paul's & we had a magnificent ride quite far south on the peninsula. My horse was a lively beast & I had a good time trying to hold him in. He had some rather frantic gaits, very western & untrammeled. The girl I rode with most of the time teaches riding to girl scouts. I was amazed to note her seat wasn't so hot, not even so good as mine & I don't consider myself an accomplished horsewoman, through ignorance of many technical points. The man with us taught me a lot when we got back about bits. I was appalled to see some of the torture instruments they put in the mouths of hard-mouthed beasts, like mine. I think I could have ridden him without such a cruel device. We had lunch out & I got back near three; & then we all dressed up & Paul took some indoor pictures of K. & me. When we finish the roll I'll send them. The pictures Lou took last weekend didn't come out at all, the schlemiel.

Kathy did an astounding thing today. Paul (II) had a penny & she took it & he wanted it back & she took a big bite out of his hand. He shrieked with pain & surprise, this being the first time she's made an effort to defend herself (however reprehensible the means) but now he regards her with a new respect. Coin [?] with her using biting as a means of assault and/or defense, she has also abandoned it as a token of affection. Now she knows the meaning of a "big sweet kiss" & gives me many. She gave Ann one the other day & receives as many from little Paul, from whom she undoubtedly learned this necessary & charming social gesture. She has grown up an awful lot since she's been here & I'm sure a great deal of it has been through contact with him & the family. Ann for one treats her and reprimands her as if she were an older child - her food is set in front of her, just as Paul's is, & she is scolded for bubbling in her glass, just as he is. The change is all for the better. Now she can climb

downstairs as well as up & also one the bookcases in her room (fortunately empty). She understands a great deal tho still doesn't talk, except silly stuff. Paul & she spend several periods throughout the day in generally cooperative play, usually centering around the blue blanket (sent from Chicago on an emergency basis). They drag it around together & roll each other up in it & it is loads of fun to watch them. Occasionally they will climb on separate wooden chairs & jump up & down in unison, shouting & making the most god-awful racket. I think he had adjusted beautifully to her presence & she benefitted immensely from his.

Gosh darling my arm is stiff now. Serves me right for resisting so fiercely the efforts of my grammar school teachers to learn me Spencerian. This is the way I first learned to write. This is the way they wanted me to write. And this is the way I do write, goddamit.

I do love you tho, terribly much. Jill

JILL TO AL APRIL 9, 1945 V-MAIL

Al Darling,

The unheard of happened today - the gas company sent me some money, along with a very nice note, even though it was planotyped. "In view of your good (get that) credit record we are refunding your deposit plus 5% interest". I shall buy a prize Henry Kaiser with that. Other than that my day was uneventful. We went calling on some people we didn't like this morning, just dropped in to sneer at your towels as Perelman would say, only in this case it was their baby. Then we shopped, ate & slept, got up & took an airing & Kathy being stuck away with an aspirin to soothe an aching lower jaw (a great molar is sprouting) we're about to eat again. This kind of life is very good for me, for a

while anyway. For the first time in years, since we were together in Washington, I am sleeping without effort. I left my sleeping pill subscription in Chicago on purpose. And I guess I'm gaining weight - I wouldn't know. I just wish I could get more exercise - lacking a vehicle for Kathy, I don't get much walking in. I've been reading some short stories by one Wm. Irish. They have good suspense & good descriptions of horrid situations though their literary qualities stop right there. It is funny that so many writers have missed on the mystery horror form. Even if the style is good (which it is not with any American I can think of - & only one contemporary Englishman that I know of - Graham Greene) there is always a pervasive thinness of motivation about them. Maybe it is because sustained horror just isn't realistic (a thin excuse that, since life can be pretty damned horrible). But even so, is only good literature realistic? Oh, Henry James is an exception - he really does write very literary & good ghost stories, though The Turn of the Screw bored me personally. But I can see where it was good.

This is a subject I seem to touch on every couple of months or so in my letters to you, it seems. What a one-track mind! I do so love being scared to death, though, though my demands are very exacting - it must be in an artistic fashion possible.

I'm going to stop making eternal & it would seem conventionally obligatory references to the news from now on - that it's very good, etc. etc. OK, it is good but until the day you dock in this country I shall snub it unmercifully. I'm damned tired of optimistic prognostication all the way round.

But I do love you.

Jill

AL TO JILL APRIL 9, 1945

Darling Jill,

Just to make a full envelope, I'm sending you a V-mail from the New Yorker cartoonist in reply to my request for the conditions under which I might have the original. Your may remember it. A frowsy woman is drinking breakfast coffee, reading a V-mail, and says to her mother, "Of all the dismal, remote places to spend Christmas -- Palestine!" The other note is thanks for a collection of chocolate and cigarettes we took in the company for a hospital, badly equipped and most dreary, which was just liberated. Most of the occupants were old PWs. A third thing I want to enclose but which turned out to be too thick was a letter I just got from Hank Dannenberg. He has been in a morass of tough luck for the last couple of months. He exhausted his money paying for treatment of his father-in-law who has been very ill. Millie had a surprise operation for a tumor in the uterus. Then she had a nervous breakdown. Then they doubled the rent on his garage after a lot of controversy. His balance has been bad since his ear operation and he had a bad fall as a result. He claims my letter cheered him up. I don't see how it could do anything else under the circumstances. Unless you object and I think you won't mind, though I can't reach your pearly ear at the moment, I believe I'll send him a loan of \$100 from my cash on hand. I know he'll appreciate it physically and morally. I sure hope he gets out from under. He has lots of ability & energy but he is really plagued by tough breaks. Look at me being sorry for a civilian.

I note with applause that you have arrived and settled down completely in SF, probably the sole person doing so in its present crowded condition. Your first four letters have arrived and I am flabbergasted by your good nature. You always bite me before kissing me. Reaction to the horrible trip no doubt. I think I felt better about your obstetrical experience than your peregrination. And I know Kathy must not be the easiest child in

the world to handle. I wouldn't worry about her not being the most popular baby on the train. Everything in its own place. A gay or noisy baby makes demands on one's attention & that sets very ill with the traveller who wants to forget all. On a big steamship, she would undoubtedly cause a sensation. I still think she is beautiful & that is all that matters. I'm sure, however, that little Paul will be a good influence on her, directly and indirectly. I find generally, by the way, that your analyses of her conduct are very good & consistent. Even though I don't know her personally, I'm willing to believe practically all you say about her, which automatically puts your character analysis in a class with a select few authors in world literature.

The weather here lately has been cool but bright. At the moment, supper is over and my field desk is receiving the only warmth it ever gets from the setting sun. Otherwise, it is cold in here and I'm glad I don't have to spend too much time indoors. My favorite sport is speeding along superhighways these days. They certainly have a magnificent road system here. How abysmally stupid the Germans were to have started this war. They had more than any other European nation I know of the material goods. If they could have had a developmental socialism instead of their criminal, atavistic, militaristic, tribal socialism, they would lead the world by example today instead of being the dirt trampled by the feet of millions of men. Now that our time is drawing near an end over here, we are noticing with increasing enthusiasm our great victories in the Orient. I feel that the two wars (geographically speaking) will not finish very far apart. Our cleanup job is much greater here, and the basic war potential of Germany has been much greater than that of Japan can possibly be.

The German population continues to get rebuffs from the soldiers in its attempts to be friendly. In individual cases, the policy is untenable, but time & investigation will bring out those cases. The desire to make friends with the troops is a very natural one to have friendly conquerors if one must have

conquerors. Already I've had the cousin in Milwaukee gag pulled on me. That's in the same class with those people who are now conveniently pulling a Jewish grandfather out of the bag in asking for privileges. Granted the degree of personal responsibility for any form of government is small, but it shouldn't be encouraged to be small, and therefore a theory of personal responsibility for the group (a "myth" after Sorel, if you prefer) is needed, except in cases where individuals have actually worked vigorously & consistently against the criminal government. One may say, now, that Italy, Petain France and Franco Spain are of the same category of evil & aggressive governments & their peoples ought equally to be judged guilty with their countries, but I think the difference lies, unfortunately for the Germans, in the teutonic traits of duty-culture, thoroughness, and organization. Taken together with the evil direction, they add up to the greater crime. By their incapacities, these others escape the final penalty. I might add, in the case of Spain especially & with much truth about France, that their peoples put up a noble struggle. The Spanish have atoned already.

That's all for now. I love you dearly.

Al

AL TO JILL APRIL 10, 1945 V-MAIL

Dearest Jill,

Although the day has dawned brightly, there is a chill in the air that would make these hands non grata on your body. But then, they would never be chilled under such circumstances anyhow. I had a good night's sleep. I found a nice new sheet sack that I can crawl into and thus sleep between sheets and at the same time be warm. I saw a movie last night for the first time in a

month and time didn't make its corn less irksome, fourth-rate crime detection. It did put on public display, however, Elliat Roosevelt's wife, Faye Emerson, and the best adjective for describing her would be, I suppose, statuesque. Then I read a while and fell asleep. Breakfast this morning consisted of fresh eggs again. I don't know what to make of it. Perhaps the army wants to improve our spirits for the time when it will politely inform us that it will be our privilege to go fight the Japs in the Orient.

I haven't been reading much lately. I still have the printed contents of two New Yorkers to finish -- the cartoons always go in the first ten minutes -- and Atlantic Monthly, which doesn't look very interesting and Henry Esmond which can scarcely be called suspenseful. Then I have other odd bits around and the Stars and Stripes which is poor excuse for an army newspaper. One of these days I may be getting some of the baggage I left in a warehouse in Rome. I put a request through channels for it, and estimate that I have a fifty percent chance of getting most of it before I reach Chicago or Japan. My latest tipster on the Japanese situation tells me that most of us will go wherever we're going via the "old country".

The region we're in here has plenty of forests and good farm land worked by more modern methods than you find down south. All the towns and small cities have individual victory gardens, apparently, where each person supplements his table of grains. Outside the curfew hours, they throng out to cultivate their messes. They don't seem excited about the end of their war, just more or less resigned to it. Those I've seen who sniff and snort as if something is up are a handful of the intellectual occupations and some of the crackpot stragglers who browse about the city ruins.

Ho hum -- we had a heavy supper & I had a fine bottle of heavy meat wine during it. Afterwards I promptly fell asleep and now it is 9 P.M. and I am just stirring again. But I feel fine. If I could

only spend the rest of the evening with my head on your lap
listening to the Blues.

A thousand kisses to you darling.

Al

JILL TO AL APRIL 12, 1945

Al Darling --

For some mysterious reason this typewriter has started working again, and once more I am at one with my muse. Well, maybe the reason isn't so mysterious but it is nonetheless bloodchilling for that. I remember now seeing little Paul playing with it yesterday. I was about to tell him to take his bloody little hands off it but got distracted and apparently this is the result. A very mechanically inclined kid. But it is nice to be able to write you and answer your letters without taking three hours and a bad case of hand cramp to do it. I got two letters from you yesterday, March 28 and 30, confirming my suspicions that you are roaming over the fatherland. So are a lot of other guys at the moment, within 60 miles from our side of Berlin, the latest dispatches say.

I think it is wonderful that you got a cornet and I hope you keep it. Just think of being able to do dishes again to that gentle lull. And you said you heard from Johnnie. Well, yes, he was always a lad tinged with an unaccountable bitterness, as long as I've known him - unaccountable at times because of the erstwhile plushy nature of his existence - or perhaps for that very reason then. He was spoiled yet perceptive, and I guess the combination made him feel disoriented in peace as well as in war.

I got a heck of a fine letter from Ed today, my first really informative piece of mail from the family since I left, making me miss them a lot. They have retired him from the Army course because of old age and now he is just waiting for reassignment at home. He feels very disoriented too, not knowing how long he will be at home and whether to loaf or get a job. But he says the one redeeming feature is that he is still in uniform, and closed the letter with the intention to hie off to a beer parlor with all the other 18-year-old veterans at home now. It's a funny sensation, seeing him shoot into manhood almost overnight. Now I know in part at least the meaning of that old maternal cliché.

I think there is some truth in your observation of Kathy's speechlessness. She sure can get what she wants without talking, words anyway. I know she understands a lot. She shakes her head for no, and says "yah" for yes, but she is like a trained horse. She makes stock replies to stock questions. If you say, "Did you have a nice time today," "Do you like so-and-so" she will say "yah" but if you ask her "Do you want so-and-so" she will say no, rather, shake her head. But if she sees you making a pass at the ice box or the cookie jar she will scream with anticipation, although she may still be shaking her head at the query "do you want". Anyway, those are my observations of today. The situation will probably be different tomorrow.

We had a nice day yesterday. We left the kids with this nice colored maid, now converted into a sitter, and Ann and I went downtown yesterday in the afternoon. We did a little shopping - I bought a white two-piece bathing suit, which makes me look fat - and then went to see an awful movie, Brewster's Millions. But the novelty of going to a movie in the afternoon carried us through. Then we met Paul for dinner, which was consumed in Chinatown. Then we came home early and played our interminable game of rummy (contract). Today we went with Bernice and her sister and sister's four-year-old girl to a small beach at the Marina yacht harbor (near the Golden Gate Bridge) and spent a long while in the sun and ate a picnic lunch

there. You can imagine the shambles - three small ones wading in the food, knocking over cokes, rolling bananas in the sand, then eating them, Kathy being the chief offender on that score. She ate a huge adult lunch - a tuna-fish sandwich, applesauce, a banana, a carrot and endless quantities of graham crackers. In fact, she is always eating crackers, from one meal right up to the next. I would say I don't know where she puts all the food except I do - her stomach billows out in front of her like the sails on a four-master. Poor Ann frets over Paul's nutrition and has trouble getting so much as a pea down him and there is our child, stoking away like a steam engine. I too do my share, having gained a small matter of 8 pounds since I've been here. The gain is good for me but I really need more exercise to make it look perfect - I'm getting a bit flabby from not walking. The weekly horseback ride just isn't enough exercise.

We got back about two and the kids feel into bed exhausted. I wish I could make Kathy sleep outdoors but she won't. As a result, the good part of the day when it is warm is shot.

The sunny day and the great red blotches pervading my exterior have made me think of summer back home with you, and in turn, I feel unreasonably (in the light of current events) depressed over the prospects of long hot days and light nights without you again, perhaps. I don't mean to be masochistic, but I just can't bring myself to truly expect anything else this summer, even with victory so near. I guess I've had some taste of disappointed hopes and now it's become a habit. Oh, I can stand waiting from here on in, and the summer won't last forever. I just wish it would never come until you come home.

Well, darling, it's time to go to bed. I love you as always, forever.

Jill

AL TO JILL APRIL 12, 1945

Darling,

Here are pictures for you, of me, of course. My eternal dilemma in photography is subject matter. Since one can get millions of photos on all subjects better done than with my little Agfa, I am confined to the personal. I like group pictures of soldiers but really don't know whether you find them interesting, since you don't know the soldiers. That leaves myself, in whom presumably you are interested, since you married me. That explains the pictures. If you want to know, I feel exactly this way towards your pictures. All I like are you and Kathy, preferably against a nice background.

Last night we had a veritable feast. It was cooked and presented by Lt. Pregre, the French officer attached to us and altogether was a fine accomplishment on his part. I'm enclosing the menu with the signatures of those attending. The guests were three officers from the French mission. One of them remarkably enough graduated from the University of Chicago and lived at Int. House. He was before our time but we knew some people in common. He was, perhaps thereby, the most intelligent of the lot, although the others were good company too. The liquor was overpowering in abundance, as you can see. No mention is made of the dry Vermouth & Martel we had as aperitifs on the menu. I was really roaring by the time the party ended and had a titanic struggle with my bed clothing before I could finally drop off to sleep. Today, I've been as meek as a lamb and slightly woozy. Fortunately, I haven't had much to do. All the liquor (Class B captured enemy supplies) the Germans brought into the Reich is appearing. Perhaps it's their V-3 (though Sen. Kesselring said he was that).

I'm going to try to get a haircut now with Sgt. Scott. I understand there's a GI barber nearby. By the way, have you been cutting Kathy's hair? In one of the little pictures you sent me, she had

the most fantastic hairdo, like a clipped hedge. She looked very barbaric. But nice.

I love you, dearest.

Al

JILL TO AL APRIL 13, 1945 V-MAIL

Darling,

Along with the rest of the world, I was terribly shocked and saddened by the President's death today. I don't know why it should have come as such a surprise and shock but it did - you somehow always come to expect immortality of the people you love or respect. I probably would have felt worse (if possible) about Wallace's convention defeat had I been more realistic about the death of great men. As it is, I've been listening for several hours to radio commentators re President Truman and it's pathetically obvious how the boys are trying to make the best of a poor thing. Another Cal Coolidge only a little left of center this time. Oh, he's a good guy all right. It's just a shame America has to falter from the tradition of presidential greatness, or rather, stop it just when it was getting started. And it's so damned pathetic that FD couldn't have lived until victory in Europe at least.

And another thing to haunt me - it occurs to me that the 7th will be fighting in southern Europe long after the other Armies have met and kissed the Russians in the north, because they say South Germany will be another center of Nazi resistance. And they also say that anyway, after VE day, it will be a damned long time before they start sending men back because of shipping congestion. It's all very rosy and my dreams don't help much. I

dreamt last night that you came back for an instant, perhaps less than a day, only to have to go off again to a new assignment, as captain in charge of the men aboard a doughnut ship to Greenland. Yes, it was a doughnut ship. Your job was to bring pastries to our troops stationed there. You and the meeting were infinitely sweet and you assured me you would be back in a month. So actually the dream was rather a cheerful one while it was happening and became only sad when contrasted with reality. At least I got to see you in it, although we got no further to my infinite chagrin. In all these dreams you are always dashing off and I always want you to present me with a child before you do dash off. I guess I do want another one pretty badly and am willing to settle for the second best reality of having it, even if you are still not a civilian.

I was downtown for a couple of hours during Kathy's nap today and got you a couple of books, the Porter one, the Leaning Tower (I hope it's not the same as the one Buss sent - you did specify not to send The Laughing Judas but she wrote still a third one, I think) and Koestler, Arrival and Departure. I haven't read it and suspect it's not as good as Darkness at Noon but since we have the latter at home (I'll send it to you when I get back), I thought you might be interested in reading this also, and owning it. By the way, darling, did I dream this, or have you asked me for some other books, more technical ones. I can't remember - if so, ask me again. I'll get the next batch for you in Chicago - I'll be back there at least by the first of June, if not before. I still haven't made reservations, you see.

I've been taking care of the two kids since before five, when Ann went out to meet Paul for ice skating. It's not a hard job. Paul is much better behaved than when with his parents - I'm sure Kathy is when I'm not around. He has a fearful temper too, incidentally, if possible worse than hers.

The end and I love you

Jill

AL TO JILL APRIL 13, 1945

Dearest Jill,

There is an ancient German man whom we have tolerated to live on these premises while we are camped here. He is silent, grim and formidably entrenched in the world that follows this one. This afternoon he straightened his old hulk and spoke to us: "I have learned that Roosevelt is dead. That is terrible, terrible. He should have lived." I believe he gave the eternal judgement, from an awful depth of experience, despair and wisdom. It was an eerie wind of unexplainable origin blowing across a forlorn prairie. No one was cheerful today. The President, with his fine sense of humor, would probably have chuckled over the consternation in the ranks of his foes as well as his friends. But now he is gone and the responsibility for the future rests very heavily upon his critics, a turn of fate they will feel more and more. There is no more Roosevelt to pass the buck to, to accuse and to denounce. They have their own chance to be great now - the whole motley assortment and may the best men win. I know little about Truman save that he will not win the peace by himself. He will need a working plurality of politicians to succeed. He will be able to use personally only a fraction of the power Roosevelt wielded. If he defines his own scope properly, I think he may be actually much better than generally estimated. I'm sure his past machine activities won't enter into the incomparably larger situation in which he now finds himself.

Here is the menu from that small party Lt. Pregre gave the other night and which I described to you in my last letter before this. I am fully recovered by now, I might add though I cast a jaundiced eye at anything that looks like Benedictine.

I haven't had any mail from you for several days - strange, after the first San Francisco flurry. Spring must be wooing you away. It hasn't had much effect on me here save to miss you the

more. Yesterday some combination of dank elements blew into a breeze that transported me to 57th St., my small room and the open window. I don't think I could ever lose the faintest nuances of memories of the time we have spent together. It is a closed circle too. I love you too much to forget them and I love you as much when I remember them.

Many a kiss to you, darling. Say hello to Kathy and the Oppenheims.

Always your

Al

JILL TO AL APRIL 15, 1945

Darling,

Not much mail has come from you this week, through no fault of yours and it arouses no animus on my part. But it makes me feel a little more lonely and separated from you than ordinary and I look forward to tomorrow's (Monday's) delivery with feverish anticipation. Though I keep fairly busy I manage to find time to miss you inordinately. I always realized the gap you left in my life - enormous it is, too - and now I see how much of a gap you make in Kathy's. She has this violent passion for Paul because he is the nearest thing to a father she's seen - that is, a man who comes and goes regularly, who is sweet to her, and who anyway has, possibly, an intangible quality of attractiveness to females. But to a certain extent, and necessarily, this passion is unrequited. When he picks Paul up she wants to be picked up too and falls into a jealous fury but he can't pick her up too because after all Paul is his son and can't be made to feel displaced. Etcetera, etcetera. So she

spends all the more time crawling over me, kissing and being kissed, stomping on my stomach and pulling at my skirts (or pants) to be picked up. It's a hopeless situation in a way - until you come home and even then, until we have another child. She gets more and more dependent on me, the more her horizons and her emotions develop and expand, because there is nobody else to satisfy her and to ease her gradually to a position of less importance. This is not the place to do it because so much attention is directed to Paul anyway, it would be just silly for me to jump in and pay even more attention to him, to the neglect of her, particularly since she is handicapped by having one less parent present than he. Well, at every point in their lives children are momma's babies - I've seen worse than Kathy - she at least is very tractable when left with strangers, as long as I am completely out of sight. And I could expect Kathy to react strongly to anything any child reacted to at all, her being the great bustling emotional type that she is.

Next door is a huge family of people named D'Angelo. The parents are from Palermo and look considerably older than Mom and Dad and there are a half dozen girls of all ages and conditions of life and a son. The girls I've met and can distinguish from the howling mob of in-laws are all very bouncy and intelligent and there are a lot of grandchildren, one boy at least resembling strongly the baby pictures of Buss. They are pleased as anything that I am a DeGrazia and this weekend Kathy and I have had a fine time howling on their front steps with them. I went to the movies with two of the unmarried girls Friday night and it was pleasant to have their company, although the movie was a stinker, a Western and one of those Hollywood psychological frauds, Guest in the House, which packed about as much impact as Superman. All about a neurotic girl who comes to live with a (it says here, that's what the man says) healthy happy family, and commences to drive them into the most inexplicable forms of neurotic behavior. The husband starts painting murals for a church instead of pursuing his erstwhile happy healthy profession, which was illustrating for Cosmopolitan Magazine. His busty model, who lives with the

family (that's what they do in happy healthy families, in case you ever decide to take up commercial art) gets drunk, his young daughter takes to wearing her bathrobe all day long and asking for her meals on a tray and the servants leave. In the end the incubus is routed over a cliff into the Long Island Sound (which looked suspiciously like the Pacific to me) by the intimation that there is a canary loose in the house. Canary, hell, it must have been bats. In the producer's belfry, I hasten to add. While you are looking up the word for fear of birds, would you mind hunting around for the term, fear of movies, because that's what I have, brother.

That's what I did last night. Oh, before that, driven by the urge to move my muscles further than reaching for the clutch on the Ford, I went down to the Crystal Palace Baths, right at the foot of this hill, conveniently located. It sounds like a Turkish night but actually it's just a very fine large salt water pool. It was as satisfactory as any indoor pool although I don't like any of them, spoiled as I've been by my life on the Atlantic coast and Lake Michigan.

Friday night we went over to Berkeley to see an ice show. It's the first one I've ever seen and while there was one very good man skater it was a joy to watch, I reacted as I do to all spectacles, except movies (despite what I said above) and plays, i.e., I was vaguely depressed and bored. It seems as if, unless I am called upon to identify actively with the players, as in a show, spectacles of this nature, ballets, concerts and spectator sports only make me restless and introverted. I'd much rather be home being busy or reading. It's probably fearfully neurotic and only goes to show that I don't appreciate music, in the one case anyway.

One of those days I took the kids to Fisherman's Wharf and bought a little turtle. He was the liveliest one in the tank but when we got him home, near dinner time, I showed him to Kathy and she grabbed him and took a big bite, and while he

got his appendages out of harm's way fast enough, the experience so traumatized him that he hasn't stirred or eaten since, and will only do the latter when we shake up the bowl. Mean mean little Kathy. We took them to the beach this morning where Paul used up the rest of his film, so the pictures should be ready at the end of this week. I took Kathy to the water's edge and the water came in and she sat down in it and got mad and scared as hell. As it is, I haven't been able to give her a bath for ages. I tried today and she keeps leaping out of the bathtub, which is high as it is, with the hysterical strength and determination of a wild dog. I guess I'll just have to stop washing her until she gets over whatever trauma she had. I know what it was, too. I washed her hair this week under the most terrific conditions of duress. She slipped and bumped her head and soap got in her eyes but I had to go through with it. You just can't leave the soap in her hair until she gets over screaming.

I'm getting quite a sunburn on my arms and nose. Ann and I have this nonstop game of rummy and we play it on the front steps, during the kids' naps, when the sun is hottest.

Well, it is time to go to bed. I love you infinitely, darling, and pray that you'll be home soon.

Jill

AL TO JILL APRIL 15, 1945

Dearest Jill,

I'm sorry I didn't get around to writing you yesterday, but I've been on the go almost constantly. The first mail from you in several days reached me this evening. I can't say that the news

contained therein made me feel less tired. There is such a thing, I suppose, as bracing oneself against the possibility of a dear friend's death, but there is no escaping the incredibility and melancholia of it. I had to read your lines several times before actually fully believing that the words meant Bill was dead, that he wouldn't be around for this or for that, that he had slipped his groove in life and had gone wandering off somewhere. And every time a good man dies, it seems impossible that he can be replaced, personally or socially, that our lives must be less full forever thereafter and that our world must be in straits more dire. The traits he possessed and the type he represented are in many men, for no man is unique in his ideals, and will weave their way into our lives in sublimation and surrogation. Therefore it is true and it is not true. I feel you should not commit yourself to a philosophy of pessimism if he shall have died "in vain". All death is in vain. And wouldn't we be presumptuous to believe that the many millions of dead in history may have been in vain but that here in our year of the Lord, 1945, we shall so manipulate destiny that our cherished friends shall not have died in vain. A man is no more to be mourned because he died in a lost cause. Nor is evil any different when one has not lost some friend to it. Some may claim that to involve oneself is the real mistake, that the struggle is to be avoided, granted the foregoing once one has entered the arena. Even if one accepts the allure of this proposition, however, it has its practical difficulties. The age is particularly severe on innocent bystanders. Life is a continual frustration and fright. Better a decent gamble, accompanied by self-respect and a zest for life.

Apart from these thoughts, there are sentiments I can't express. Bill would never express them about me, and I won't express them about him. I will write Elizabeth tomorrow.

I enjoyed your longer letter of the day before. I had an idea that Kathy was brought up too perfectly by you to gain from contact with others but that's all right too. Isn't she a little young to be

necking with boys? I hope you both continue to have a pleasant, easy time there. I'm sure you don't need me to tell you not to hurry back to Chicago. You'll get ample warning whenever I head that way. In fact, you'll probably hear the initial bellow straightaway. Mom probably had plenty of interest in the new shift of De Grazia's on her hands.

As always, I love you dearly.

Your

Al

JILL TO AL APRIL 17, 1945

Al darling --

Yesterday answered my fondest hope (wartime anyway) -- that I get a letter from you. It was from April 1st, a fine 3-part v-mail which miraculously arrived in all three pieces. I was interested in the things you had to say or implied about the Allied occupation of Germany. I hope you are giving them hell, for unlike you, and anyway ordinarily more frivolous and superficial in my judgements, I still hate them like hell. Ann and I spent our afternoon off this afternoon going to the movies. We saw a ridiculous picture about the Nazis, Hotel Berlin, which is not relevant to the topic, but also saw some good newsreels (as good as newsreels are these days or any day) about fighting in Germany. There I got a glimpse of the rubble of Coblenz, which must be typical of many cities there now. The newsreels are really very inadequate, though. They are much too short and choppy. Assuming that putting out documentary war films takes much time and effort, then why don't they give us just long unedited shots of the war? Certainly one would learn more

about what is going on than by these short fullball reporting glimpses we get now. I find our whole reportage of the war sadly inadequate anyway. The newspapers just give footnotes to maps, using the most undescriptive metaphors imaginable. In fact, now that one thinks about it, and after having talked it over at dinner, the only really informative war reporting one gets is in the New Yorker war articles, which give full reports on selected situations.

We had an awfully pleasant day today. This morning we left the house early and took the kids and Bernice's sister and her kid to the beach by the ocean. The fog came in shortly after we got there but it was fairly warm and the kids played in the sand and ate peanut butter and sand sandwiches and sand-coated bananas. We decided there and then never to let them feed on the beach again but take them to a grassy spot for lunch. Lenne's little girl, who is just three and very precocious, harasses the life out of Kathy, to my annoyance. They have to be watched all the time. We was taking Kathy's food and burying it and Kathy would be thrown into a tremendous fit of temper and sorrow. But even so Kathy was well behaved. She loves the sand and plays in it, shoveling it into her pail and sifting it through her fingers. About every half hour she will abandon playing and decide she loves me and crawl all over me, until she feels at home in the world again and then she goes back to playing. She is unlike the older children in this respect. They can stay away from their mothers for longer periods of time. The age makes the difference and also the fact that she is a naturally very cuddly little girl. She is getting as brown and healthy as she was last summer. She is always barefoot and in the thinnest of cotton shirts and pants these days, although the weather is far from hot, and yet is always warm as toast and will probably never have a cold again, until next winter. I've decided that shoes are pretty silly for her as long as the ground or pavements are warm, for she walks perfectly well without them and they are just a lot of trouble to take on and off when we are going to the beach. Yesterday afternoon after her nap she just played outside on the sidewalk

and I let her go barefoot. The streets are not very dirty and she manages beautifully climbing up and down without them. So don't go throwing canards about shoelessness because I think it's HEALTHY. I go barefoot a lot too but that's just because I don't like the shoes I have.

Yesterday morning I took her down to the beach near Fisherman's Wharf. We went alone because Paul was fussy and Ann wanted him to be by himself, and walked the whole way. Downhill it was easy, about six blocks and when we got there we felt very adventurous, being in a strange place we found all by ourselves, in full view of all the landing barges painted mossy green riding at anchor in the bay. There was another woman there also with the same philosophy of child care I'm developing. Her four-year-old and his cousin were swimming in the icy by-waters and she looked on calmly. We talked for a while and it was very pleasant except that I had to carry Kathy all the way home. But I think that will be my hangout for our morning expeditions and next time I will swallow my natural antipathy to the cold and bring my bathing suit. I wore my suit this morning and stopped freezing after the first half hour or so. I must say that I feel rugged as hell these days, swinging babies and bushels baskets of oranges around as if they were peas, in fine contrast to my evil humors of this winter.

The colored girl came around one today and Ann and I went out for a gooey fudge sundae lunch, then some shopping (for sunproof cream to put on my ever-reddening nose) and then to the above mentioned flicks. This colored gal handles the children marvelously. We got home around seven and Paul was up, as calm as a cucumber, and Kathy was in bed. I went in, expecting a thrilled reception after her missing me all afternoon, but she gave me a cool "hi" and went back to playing in her bed. I think that's the test of whether she's had good comforting treatment throughout the day. She really is such a good child when she's not over-stimulated or badly thwarted. And what an aircraft spotter she's becoming. Whenever the Navy patrol

blimp sails overhead she gives a little yelp for me to come look too, and then points and say "Dere" or "Dit", whatever the hell that means. Her vocabulary is limited but it doesn't bother me, although Ann says that I should keep repeating words for her to learn. But I think that she'll start saying other words besides those in the b and d family when her vocal equipment is ready. God knows it's been apparent since birth that she is neither dull-witted nor deaf.

I've got to get up at six tomorrow morning to call Western Pacific RR to see if I can get a reservation 30 days in advance. If you call later they are all gone. Them's the conditions that prevail. However, they sounded more encouraging and somewhat happier to get my business than Southern Pacific, and I am heartily sick of the latter, Salt Lake Wyoming and Nebraska right of way.

So, on that little note of Travel in These United States I shall leave you. All my love to you and the family sends much too.

Jill

AL TO JILL APRIL 17, 1945

Jill, My Love

Germany

The evening is a very pleasant one. Tom is working to get a generator connected to the wiring of the house so that we will have lights tonight and I am just passing away this time at my favorite pastime. There is no use denying it. Spring is here and we're not together. The world of trees is bursting into bloom and I can't touch your hand nor kiss your lips. The birds sing unceasingly and the windows that aren't blown out are opened wide anyway, but I can't smile at you. I can't tell you all I need to tell you or sit by while you fix up a salad and watch you or

expound to you some plausible but fantastic theory to explode some perfectly rational conviction on your part. I can't argue you out of a chocolate soda or into a beer, nor again out of shoplifting. In fact, as you see, life for me is very dull and spring makes the dullness cut like a knife. Exciting things happen, I must admit, and the time does not drag too much, but I'm like the White Russian who drives a cab in Paris, adaptable but full of a more gorgeous past.

This morning, after much effort, I wrote a short note to Elizabeth. I wish I had a magic wand that could dissipate the sad blow but yet preserve the precious memories she has, but that is not for anyone. What is the name of their daughter? I don't believe I was ever told. Perhaps I can find her a nice toy over here.

It takes a long time to wind up these wars, doesn't it? Just moving large armies in takes time and effort. Still we are occupying the major part of Germany right now and that would take some time no matter when it was done. The Russians are driving in a very interesting manner towards Salzburg and Berchtesgarden. Plenty of empty bottles will fill the streets when we finally meet up with them.

I think the remarks of Von Papen and von Mackenson upon being captured are very typical of the selfish ruthlessness with which the Germans have driven their armed hordes over Europe. "You're not interested in an old man" (after the Germans have been mobilized to the last man and he of all men) and "Can't you do something about these Russians stealing my chickens", that after a lifetime of butchering men and enslaving the rest. The Germans have no conscience about having fought this war, as far as I can make out. They are only sorry that they didn't win. They are already insisting on rights to which they have no pardonable access. And, willy-nilly, we are their liberators, for the most severe measures which we can deal out to them now are nothing compared to the punishment

we gave them while we were conquering them. The only thing worse than the Nazi Party, total war, and the AAF would actually be what Hitler promised them, the burning of all their villages, the raping of their women, and the dispatch of a good part of the population to Siberia -- "Sieg oder Siberien" as it is scrawled on the walls. But, granting that that is mostly impossible, what can you do with a people like that? Their ostensible qualities of cleanliness, orderliness, thriftiness, and modernity baffle, as well they might, most people who seek for something tangible to reform in the enemy. It is much easier to wash a boy's face than to develop his character. And civilization for most people (i.e. what we are fighting for) is the opposite from wearing a loin cloth and sporting a spear. That is bad enough, but even for those people who know better, the problem of what to do with and how to handle the reformation of a nation is perhaps beyond their powers. That is one reason for not feeling too badly about some regrettable policies which may ensue. We have no right to criticize many nations and all their millions of people for not performing a clean operation which we ourselves can hardly or not at all do as an intellectual operation.

Next morning. This is going off in the mail now. I hope everything is going well in SF and that Kathy has not fallen down too steep a hill yet. Your date in Sun Valley is most acceptable to me, although I am always apprehensive about big resorts as I am with gigantic ballrooms, theatres, beaches and ships. I don't want to recreate by the numbers.

So long for today. A thousand kisses from me to you & Kathy.

Always your

Al

AL TO JILL APRIL 18, 1945

BLIMEY!

Darling Jill,

Allemagne

After a concerted attack on the mess sergeant today we finally had a decent meal tonight and as you can guess I suffered slightly from the consequences. So I took a walk with Lt. Constantine in the vicinity of our present bivouac, a term really too primitive to describe the houses we have taken over, and have not returned from it after having had an instructive and friendly talk with some Russian DPs (displaced personnel) we ran into. They are about all that is left of a thoroughly bombed out little factory and are waiting for something to be done about them. Tonight a group of them were whiling away time playing a game of cards - Russian bank I imagine, and I got into a limited sort of communication with a few of the others. They looked like a set of characters out of the Dance of the Red Poppy, and as might be expected, one of their number was actually formerly a ballet dancer, proof of which was soon forthcoming in the way of a pirouette and a couple of classic poses of the Ballet Russe. I gave them the latest lowdown on Shostakovich and they gave me a big mug of red wine, not very red, come to think of it, more of a vin rosette. There wasn't enough of it, however, to draw out my talents in the dance field and I gave no more than a passing thought to executing my three kicks in midair, a thing which, like that little runner of Saroyan, I am always convinced I can do until I try. The conversation then turned to the Germans and the usual maledictions were said over them. The ballet dancer and all of his troupe, musicians, dancers and director, were captured by the Germans and put to work as laborers on the usual level of brutality and starvation.

Damital! This started off as a very fluent letter but I was interrupted and at this late hour, some three hours afterwards, I can't see myself carrying on a conversation with you in any save

amorous terms. Love and kisses, dearest. Perhaps tomorrow morning, I'll finish properly.

Next Mawnin

God, how I hated to get up! When one thinks of the miserable mornings he has spent pulling himself to the vertical from the horizontal in his life, he is likely to be staggered into going back to back, if not worse. But we did have three soft boiled eggs apiece for breakfast, a thing I know you would appreciate as quite a treat.

Our radio monitors had Truman's speech to the armed forces written down this morning and I thought it was about equal to the task, neither more nor less. The Lincoln quotation was a good one, even because everyone knows it. Truman seems to be proceeding, as well he might, cautiously and conservatively. There will be time enough to express his originality, if he wishes ever to do so, after the country has gotten used to him. He is not a fairy tale's answer to calamity, a knight in shining armor, and I believe that he knows it.

Before I finish, I should mention the plethora of letters from you yesterday, after several days of nothingness, five, no less, stretching from March 26 to April 8. But rather than reply to them here, I'll reread them and answer them tonight.

A thousand kisses to you my love. XXX. Say hello to Kathy for me and to the rest of the family.

Always your

Al

JILL TO AL APRIL 19, 1945

Darling --

I've had a great haul of mail from you the past two days, two letters yesterday, April 3 and 6, and one today, April 9 which contained that nice letter from Alan Dunn and the French man or woman. I couldn't understand the French very well in the latter. I really don't even read that, my sole claim to language knowledge (reading) at all well. I always feel like a dog when I let letters and events pile up without answering immediately but Ann is constantly entrapping me in games of contract rummy. We keep score by the fiscal week and the past two weeks I have been ahead so I can't very well refuse to play, thus giving her the opportunity to recoup her fortunes. We play for who should buy who the sundae on our Tuesday afternoons off. Not very high stakes but this is probably the most insolvent family in the city. I really must live in a fool's paradise, financially speaking, having only myself and the baby to take care of. Anyway I never seem to be as broke as any of the people around me.

Oh, I got up at 5:30 yesterday morning and was ringing the railway office at six and thereby managed to get a reservation a month hence, May 18, a lower berth on a standard Pullman train which should be an improvement on the awful tourist train we took out. Also it's on the Western Pacific lines which are supposed to be less crowded sans SP and anyway serve three meals a day, so this time I should be able to get something to eat. I got my ticket today so am all set. I've enjoyed myself here and the trip really brought about all desired changes -- we are both brown and healthy and I've had a lot of experiences that I never would have in Chicago, namely riding and being able to sun all during April -- but I'm mildly anxious to get back. I got a nice letter from Mom yesterday and she is as anxious to see us again too. She said she couldn't wait to see Kathy and Joe together. Neither can I. I'm not so sure that Paul's influence on

her has been completely benign. For the main part, he has given her a premature start on the manly art of self-defense and aggression. Since he is constantly taking things away from her, she is learning to hit him and anybody else who thwarts her, at an unseemly age, I think. I'm not so sure, either, that he is so well-adjusted. Theoretically he gets all the right treatment but something along the line must have slipped because he whines and cries excessively, I think, and is oddly withdrawn at times. Ann says that he cries because he feels displaced by Kathy but according to one neighbor - and this was unsolicited I assure you - he has always racketed about a great deal. I think the answer is that although he is much beloved by his parents, they have never gotten over the idea that a baby interferes with one's fun. Kathy bawls loudly when thwarted but gets over it fast, and her unevenness of temper is matched by her extremely outgoing nature and exuberance. I am pretty uneven too but I doubt that she feels insecure, because she has always added to the fun of my life. When I look back on her first year, I don't think of it as a time of difficulty or tension at all although I must have had my moments. Rather, I can characterize it as fun and easy, certainly no harder or no more full of sleepless nights than I have now. They occur, as when she coughs from teething (which she did last night) but you forget about them fast.

Yesterday morning I took her to the little beach near here. It's fairly easy for us to walk downhill and I took her on the cable car back, so didn't have to do so much carrying up hill. I wore my bathing suit and froze but was rewarded by a sunburned stomach. In the afternoons we usually just hang around outside on the steps and I chat with neighbors, two of whom I like very much. One is Mrs. D'Angelo, or any member of her family. She is really a swell woman, kind and wrapped up in her devotion to her family, and interested in anyone else who has a family. Her husband is the kind of man Uncle Willie is -- you like him immediately, although he is pretty hard to understand, his English I mean. I visited her apartment today and the similarity to Mom's is startling -- the same kind of elaborately carved wood dining room furniture, the fancy modern kitchen

equipment and the voluminous double beds in every room. And lots of pictures of family all around. You can't exactly assess this type of home by the economy of the family because I've been in lots of Irish people's apartments (while canvassing in the precinct for registration, for instance) and they are notably gloomier and lacking in the pervasive family atmosphere. The German refugees apartments are gloomy and even more rococo and the one or two old-country Jewish family homes I've been in are either compulsively clean or compulsively sloppy. And so are my generalizations, you might add, *avec* right.

The other likable neighbor in Mrs. D'Angelo's building is a very ritzy wife of a naval lieutenant in her late thirties who just had her first baby. She is from Manila and very chatty and gay, as the carrier's of the white man's burden are, I guess -- the cosmopolitan touch. But she is bright and has been around and it's fun to talk to her. She is not a Navy wife, I hasten to add -- her husband is just a uniformed civilian.

The dagger deal sounds fine. I needed a vegetable knife anyway. Oh, I keep asking people questions in a desultory way about living here, and the conclusions I've come to so far is that A) prices are high; B) the land is fertile. Marin County is the prettiest and nicest place -- you visited it once yourself when you were here, when we went out to see Bernice and Pete. It is not cloudy, transportation is rapid by auto and is warmer than the city. So is it down on the Peninsula, where your friend from Europe lived. I've forgotten her name which is one reason I'm not looking her up. The other is that we're always so busy with just plain routine I never seem to look up people. I was supposed to call Bernice Neugarten's sister here and haven't done it either. I suppose the real reason is that I'm embarrassed to get on the phone and talk to a stranger. If I were lonely or bored those factors might outweigh my embarrassment but as it is, I am more than grateful for the opportunity to let the telephone alone for a change. I hope you won't be annoyed by this.

I got a letter from Rosable today too. They are planning to come to the coast after the end of Buster's term at Conn College this June. That was an Artie Shaw record she had. I don't remember the exact title but the lines I do remember are "Take your shoes off, baby, and walk barefoot through my heart." After all, it's your money, chum.

It shouldn't be so amazing but I still am amazed -- that you said exactly what I've been thinking a long time, and have probably hinted at in a bumbling way, about the factor of individual responsibility and guilt for war and fascism. I like particularly the distinction you draw between the relative guilt of Germans, Spanish, Italians, etc. -- that it rested on the integration of the society as a whole, which would determine the extent of the individual's participation, and also on the degree of resistance. You'll be interested in the latter Koestler book (Arrival and Departure, not Darkness at Noon -- which, I monotonously refrain, I'll send you when I get back to Chicago) because it deals with the individual's responsibility for resistance in, I hasten to add, the most painful, half-assed, wrong-headed manner one could possibly conceive. I don't want to spoil your fun -- after all I'm sending you the book of my own free will, so I won't launch on a further critique except to say that I think it's a stinker. But the Katherine Ann Porter is good. I just got Amerika by Franz Kafka, out of the library. I've read only a few pages but enjoy it immensely. So far it has manifested a charming ingenuousness (my own observation), somewhat like *Candide* (it says here on the cover, that's what the man says) -- ingenuous but sharp. Klaus Mann wrote the introduction for the last -- they are much more interesting and relevant that way, I've found.

Gosh, I still haven't put the dishes away. But I love you anyway, even if you belong to the race of mankind that created dirty dishes.

Jill

AL TO JILL APRIL 20, 1945

Dearest, Deep in the heart of Germ.

Associations, -- I thought of your letter of today which I am answering and recalled your passages regarding horses, then was reminded of the fun we had riding in Cal. and then in Texas, so that when it came time to write the letterhead, it was "deep in the heart". I just had a cup of coffee courtesy of Sgt. Scott, given me when I had finally tracked to his lair the person who was putting too much resistance on the generator which had promptly burnt a fuse in protest. It was the electric coffee pot Scott had picked up. I was mollified by the coffee and we talked for a while, but now it is late and I only *[have]* time for a short letter before hitting the sack. I got a letter from Ed too today. The poor fellow would like to get himself a little more involved in the war than he is at present, being compelled to wait until the air corps decides to call him up. The air corps is too damned hoggish for personnel, I feel. But anything else is even more of a gamble. Just to place oneself at the mercy of the ground forces is not calculated to give a man the kind of location he wants at all. It's hard to advise Ed what to do. One thing about the navy is that a man is fairly certain of winding up on a ship. Ed tells me that Buzz is teaching at the U of C but doesn't tell me what subjects. I imagine it's not strictly political science because Ed mentions that separately.

This is a quaint neck of the woods we are in now. The villages are far older and the type of cultivation much different than farther West. It's not typical of Germany at all. Just as in Italy the more ancient villages escape the general destruction, because they are off the beaten path, and war, as any fool can plainly see, always follows the lines of communication.

Capt. Felder dropped by for supper tonight. He has a job which I naturally can't describe but which is a "headquarters" job and I was reminded again how lucky I am not to have one like that.

Even in the middle of a war they can be terribly dull and confined. Month after month they plug away at the same old problems, because though the tactical situation may change, the army's way of handling and reducing it is invariable. Nor do the HQ people get the feel of the country as well as the others. True, sometimes we miss a meal or two, but at different times we make up for it with something unusual and spectacular. In many ways, we have a fine outfit. We have relations with all manner of units conceivable and our personnel, partly in consequence of that, is a lot of above-average men. You can find any sort of skill at the moment you need it, it seems. That's important. And we have good scroungers and that is important also to improve the lot of the unit. Our present first sergeant, Jack Taubert, is tops, a highly intelligent and still implacable man. What he thinks of the Germans is a study in purple. A nice color, that.

So much for now, dearest. A thousand kisses to you, and don't think for a moment that I have forgotten how it feels to be your lover. Your sensual memory isn't the only acute one. But I won't waste hot breath on a sheet of paper now. The time may come soon that the moon must hide itself behind a cloud of embarrassment.

Hello to Kathy & a non-biting kiss.

Always your,

Al

AL TO JILL APRIL 23, 1945

Darling,

Monday morn in Germany

It might as well be any other day for yesterday was hardly Sunday. The only event of any note was that I got a radio going, heard a nice chamber music concert late at night, and played my cornet to the tune of Guy Lombardo's orchestra, John Anspacher being my attentive and appreciative audience instead of yourself. You two have much in common, to wit, a liking for a good dirty lick, in or out of context. One of our men was shot in the leg by a sniper Saturday while at the front, but it's only a flesh wound and he should be back with us shortly. I wasn't with him at the time but I guess they cleaned out the snipers quickly enough. As soon as I locate him, I'll bring him a bottle of champagne to stimulate his recovery. I answered Ed's letter last night, though I'm afraid there's not much in the way of advice I could give him. He'll just have to sweat it out with the Air Corps.

May I tell you an off-base anecdote? I really should tell it to Ann because she sent me a very good one about the tit-mouse. It seems that a French gentleman was in need of relieving himself and chose for that purpose a nearby fence corner. Unfortunately a gendarme came upon him unexpectedly and challenged him: "Monsieur, c'est défendu de pisser contre le mur." But our hero was quick of mind: "Mais je ne pisse pas. Je m'amuse!" "Oh, alors," replied the gendarme, "Vive le sport!"

I grant you a possible imperfection in my French. I am amused at and sympathetic with the efforts of Henry Esmond's Dowager Viscountess step-mother: "Mong cousin", she writes, "Je scay que vous vous etes bravement batew et grievement blessay!" There isn't much else in the book that amuses me much. It is certainly of another silly world, and the author has that ancient custom of building up characterizations by telling you exactly what he thinks of each person, rather than confining himself to

depicting the character and letting the intelligent reader draw the conclusions. The accounts of the Duke's campaigns in Alsace and Southern Germany are unusually interesting to me, for, obviously, here I am.

Throwing caution to the winds, here is another humorous story. (Who knows how many minor concessions I will have to make to recuperate your good will after this.) A man was waiting for a subway, his arms full of packages, and decided he would like to purchase a stick of gum from the vending machine. After much effort he pried a nickel from his pocket and put it into the machine. He had let it slip almost all the way down when he noticed to his horror that it was in fact a five-dollar gold piece. He held on desperately with his fingernails, while he searched another pocket with his other hand for some instrument to pry the coin up with, the packages making his task almost unbearably frustrating. He finally found a finger-nail file just as the train rolled in, but his frantic haste caused him to push the coin into the machine and even at the moment the train doors slammed and it pulled away. In front of him stooped an aged man tying his shoelace. He stepped back and gave him a hell of a kick in the rear. "You old son of a bitch", he screamed furiously, "always bending over tying your shoe-laces!"

In your last letter, dated April 9, you described reading my letters to Bill. I think it is silly. They were pretty dull letters, I know. I don't write for posterity, nor even for your possible perusal. It's lucky I didn't tell him what a nuisance you were.

But I love you.

Al

JILL TO AL APRIL 25, 1945

WEDNESDAY

Darling -

Two letters came from you yesterday, April 10 & 12. You are a much better correspondent than I these days since I haven't written you since Saturday, for reasons considerably less noble than a war. I went riding Sunday & through a peculiar combination of circumstances (somebody said a dirty word & I swooned, no doubt) [P.S. in a word, They tell me I was running on a curve and the horse shied at two boy scouts], dismounted hurriedly & incurred a bruised leg (where the horse bit or sat on me), a busted shoulder and a concussion. However, do not worry - by the time you get this I will be very active and even now, tho still in the hospital, I am well, as happy as I can be without you and eating a lot. Since I don't remember anything you might consider it painless too. I have a good doctor who keeps putting diapers on my shoulder since he doesn't think casts do any good. My nose is still sunburned. Paul & Ann are taking care of Kathy & she is fine. I spoke to her and also to Paul II on the phone this morning. Paul II assured me Kathy and he were having fun.

I have a ghastly roommate, however, a girl who does nothing but talk about her rectum. I do my best to feign sleep or literary conversations and that helps. She has countless visitors, all very 3600 Lake Shore Drive in appearance and economic and nationalistic group. These are the people who go to Miami or Palm Springs, who consider a 2-inch steak more priceless than victory. What a godless crew.

I'm still reading Franz Kafka. It is odd, picaresque to a certain degree, the hero wanders and is forever dogged by inexplicable bad luck. It is the European's world although the title is Amerika - the individual hemmed in by a world he never made - to a far greater extent than in the New World. And of course, as a travelog for Europeans, it is pure fantasy. The silhouette of the Prague [shamus?] is everywhere.



The arrest of Goering. Hans Wallenberg is the scowling one on the right.



Lebwohl, Goering...!

I'll be here a day or two more, I guess. It's up to the doctor - if he says I have to go home and stay in bed I might as well stay here, so as to lessen Ann's burden. Well, it's a dull subject at best. As the years progress, I get less & less interested in the afflictions of the body, probably as a defense against the possibility of having more of them. But rest easy, I'm OK. And love you dearly. They told me that all I talked, or rather argued about, Sunday was where you were. I was very upset that nobody knew where the 7th Army was. So apparently I'm faithful beyond my wildest dreams...

Jill



Jill, Kathy, Mom. Chicago Spring 1945.



The captain perambulates in a Rhineland town on his solitary Easter parade.

End of April 1945 letters

