

Notes in regard to people mentioned in Frances L. Otis Diary.

Maria Maret was chambermaid at the Constantine in 1934, struggling to bring up her boy. When he was about 20 (in 1938) he was taken for naval service, just when he could have helped her and seemed inclined to do so. For five years he was on a ship while she got on as best she could; small and ailing, but gritty and showing a good deal of intelligence in managing her life. I admire her. Now she works in a store. Francesco, alas! has no job, like 20,000 ? other Florentines.

A. B. is Signora Baravelli, a Pittsburgher, the widow of an Italian. She has lived for forty years in this house.

Armida you probably remember hearing of. She is invaluable to me, cheerfully fetching and carrying. She is almost as small as Lutie, well-proportioned with beautiful dark eyes and fine features, but her hair is almost white -very pretty, short. She has very fine feelings, is very sensitive.

Baranessa Cora calls herself English, was born in India with a Dutch name and has a Russian grandmother. Her husband is a nice Italian cavalry officer who was thrown from his horse at Caporetto and paralyzed 27 years ago. He walks and does a lot of things, however. She is very small and thin and except for her face looks about 20, with her golden curls and exquisite feet, always in American stockings, the finest I ever saw; is about Alice's age. She never noticed me at the A A but after Helen McCoy oozed away in 1941 began to visit me regularly. In mistaken kindness I suppose Helen sigged her on.

April 3rd, 1943

We heard rumours that the German officials were to be transferred to Florence, but that has been contradicted. They say that where the Germans go, bombardment follows. That gossip had made me fear we might be evacuated, which is one of my worst bugbears. It would mean going to some small town, living in a damp old house with no conveniences. Even here in Florence I know of no place where I'd find my comforts: a elevator, bath, sun and stove -without paying much more and then not having quiet and a home-like atmosphere.

I think my next worry was that this house might be taken over for army officers, as a pension near-by (St. Camillo) has been. Also they've taken much of the first floor of the Anglo-American for officials. Conte di Calvi, Princess Jolanda's husband has one of the fine suites there, along with 5 or 6 other officers, just come from Tunisia. Baroness Core was here yesterday and calmed my fears, saying they took only rather fine old residences as a rule. This house was a residence, but not especially elegant and now it is much down-at-the-heel.

Still I am trying to get my things in order, i.e. packed up, except the necessities, but that is an old story. I've been packing since Munich.

Every time Spezia and Grosseto are bombed we have the alarm. It is pathetic to see the scampering in the street. Maria told me of trying to get home during one. Every guard would insist in her going to a shelter, but she'd skip from doorway to doorway to elude the guards and finally got home so tired and breathless she felt the effects for some days. After that first confusion there ensues a sinister calm while you wonder what is happening and where. Often as not it's been a mistake here and all the fear and annoyance has been for nothing. Then again they give the alarm to clear the streets of spectators when the victims of frost bite return home from Russia.

A
April 11, 1943

At midnight there came from London: "The Italian Cruiser Trieste which was hit by American Flying Fortresses at La Maddalena, Sardinia, has since sunk." That was the ship Maria's son has been on for five years. The day passed in intense anxiety on my part for Maria, till finally Armida volunteered to see her and find out if she'd had any direct news from Francesco. To my great surprise and delight she found her calm and cheerful in the knowledge her son was safe ashore in a hospital with some minor complaint!!!! A boy with such luck ought to go far in life.

APRIL 223-4943-

Francesco came to see me the day before yesterday. He looked tired & thin after his tragic ten days. He had left here Saturday the 10th, having been discharged from hospital & ordered back to LA MADDALENA (SARDINIA). He did so not knowing that the TRIESTE, his ship, had been hit at 2.30 p.m. on Saturday. When he arrived at LA MADDALENA, he did not get off the boat, but was taken to Leghorn, then Spezia, where there were several thousands sailors. Many slept in barracks, but there was no room for all; he slept outdoors in a great square on a table, with nothing to cover him; all his clothes had gone down on the ship. He was glad to sleep out, the barracks were infested with bed-bugs & lice. In the night came the heavy raid from British-based bombers. He & his comrades fled to a hillside behind the town; in the centre not a house was left standing. Most of the inhabitants had been evacuated. ^{Bar} Well he spent about a week at LA SPEZIA, long enough to be in the second bombardment (worse) the morning of the 19th. His trousers were torn at the left knee by a piece of a bomb, while shrapnel hit him on the shoulder, but he was not injured. He showed me the bits of metal. It was a coincidence that Beppino, our former portiere, called at the same time, as Francesco, & ~~he~~ he had been hit during a bombardment in Sicily on his left knee & injured so that he was three months in hospital & later got his discharge from the army. Francesco lost not only his clothes, but the radio set he had just completed. He & others have been taking a correspondence-course on radios-set making. He lost all the books & the instruments, but he is glad to have saved his skin. I had hoped they'd not find a boat for him at once but it seems after a ten-day leave he will probably be sent to a ship at Toulon & commence all over again.

His mother was so ill in March that he was sent for & was here for 2 or 3 weeks. She got no pay for the month she was laid up & he got none because he was not on his ship to ^{receive} it. They were in desperate straits, but never told me about it, which shows what self-respecting people they were; it always hard-going when he is at home, for she cannot get enough for him to eat & has to do without herself, pretending she is not hungry.

He said the Trieste was hit by, (American Flying Fortress) explo-

Shen has mainly types Bar & let it go at that

This sheet & the following 16 were topped by the Centre Anna Maria Provana, nie Bergheer. She charged me 570 lines. N.B. In correcting the page I wrote Bar when I meant a new paragraph sign.

sives underneath, making holes which let the water in & caused her to sink; but she did not sink for ~~an~~ hour, so there were few casualties. Some were killed by the bombs on the ship; some were so ill-advised as to jump overboard & were killed by explosives in the water; he said altogether there were 14 deaths. The GORIZIA was more damaged, but on top, so she did not sink, but there were many more casualties on her. The catsalas! went down with the TRIESTE. Somehow ever had left her at Messina, including the one who had kittens during the battle of MATAPAN & again during another battle. (I have also heard over the British radio, of a cat on a British ship that had kittens during a battle.) I am wondering if cats as well as rats leave a doomed ship.

APRIL 23/1943/ GOOD FRIDAY- Began with my weekly bill, a raise ~~of~~ ^{some time} ~~for~~ a day, I'd been expecting it for months. However I had the pleasure of seeing my bath-room in order after three months. The plumber would not come. All the trouble was that a new washer was needed in the hot water faucet. The washers now are antartici- & wear out in three weeks. They finally said I'd have to have new faucets & stopped there. There I was for weeks without washstand or water-closet, with the hot water faucet of the tub only. So did the water as it had to be turned off, because it rained continually. Well, all's well that ends well. The next blow was that my door lock did not work & I had to be night & day with the door unlatched. No one would come to fix it.

SATURDAY- I had 6 calls - tired out.

Last spring Mrs. Dixon said as we sat in the entry: "Where is Miss Otis who never goes out, wearing a jacket of the latest style with pockets buttons down the front. How do you manage it?" Perhaps Anne will recognise the jacket. It's still going strong in 1943.

April the 30. I went out in it for the first time, as the spring is unusually warm.

I like to go over to the next street (via del Prato) & sit on an old stone bench there. This month I had the view of a glorious Judas tree, rearing itself high above a garden wall with wisteria clinging to it. Looking down the street towards town, you see the top of the tower of

the Palazzo Vecchio much to my ¹pleasure (I've not seen Giotto's tower for two years.) One day as I walked along the street I saw an immense furniture van draw up to the curb. When I got to the front of it I found two great oxen were harnessed to it. They were light grey with wide branching horns. Over their heads fell long red wool tassels to scare away the flies. They were picturesque indeed. "The world is so full of a number of things we all should be as happy as ~~things~~."

The Marchese and family of 5 who are upstairs, lost their apartment of twenty rooms the other night in a Naples raid. The building was a very large one, ^{compared to the} they ~~it and~~ Palazzo Pitti. No bomb hit it but the suction of the air caused it to collapse. Nothing is left. All were out of the building except ^{the} people on the first floor. At last accounts, they have not been dug out. I do not know the family here, but naturally I was grieved for them.

Misfortunes do not seem to mellow some people however. The Marchese came back from a trip to Naples with all sorts of good things to eat and they dined for two evenings in their rooms on the third floor, the maid Mira making nine trips for one dinner (of course she could not use the elevator) having to serve it all as in the dining room. She said she was so hungry she did not know ^{what} how to do & she had to carry up chicken, a great cheese & other appetising delicacies. Not a crumb did they give her. I've nicknamed them: the five little pigs.

APRIL the 30. 1943

In the depths because of the Grosseto affairs on the 26. There was no alarm, for the great planes came so high (8000) ft. that they were neither seen nor heard. After dropping bombs they swooped down within 50 ft. of the ground, machine-gunning the people. As it was EASTERN MONDAY & a beautiful day, hundreds of women & children were sunning themselves in the sea front. There was a fair with booths & a merry-go-round.

They chased the people;. ~~There was a fair with merry-go-rounds~~
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g# ~~There was a~~ #24 children were killed on the merry-go-round, 400(?)
in all. It is said the aviators who baled out of a damaged plane were
either beaten to death or lynched by the fathers & brothers of the
victims. Grosseto is only about 75 miles away, so all Florence is
talking of it. We Americans hang our heads when an Italian who is
friendly to us says: "I would not have believed it possible. They
must have been drunk". Sigr. Avitabile suggests that ^{they} ~~may~~ have
thought the tents were an encampment of soldiers - good to hear some
extenuating circumstance.

May 1943- I have been talking with our waiter Gino, whose brother
-in-law was gardener at the hospital at Grosseto. The hospital was
laid low by a bomb, but he & two others threw themselves into a
ditch in the garden & were unharmed. Then came the machine-gunning
of the whole length of the sea front from the public gardens to
the fair. He helped to carry 140 wounded children, hit by machine-
gunning, not by bombing, to the hospital. He says one man was stand-
ing at his house-door with his two children, both of whom were kill-
ed. The father, beside himself, attacked two aviators who baled out
& killed them with his fists. The Nazione has printed a letter ta-
ken from Times, lamenting our machine-gunning the Japs, along with
several letters defending it. I hope the latter are not genuine.

May 29- An Italian who likes us has suggested that the pencils
which explode may be scattered about by Germans, not dropped from
planes by Americans. There is also a rumour that they are the work
of Fascists to bring odium on America. The machine-gunning at
Grosseto, according to some, was meant for the German soldiers who
were in the crowd. All this brings me some consolation. The Ro-
man radio in English makes the very most of the Grosseto affair
with diabolic cleverness. A man speaking with the American accent
tells of his astonishment at it - he considers the American a good
fellow; he didn't believe the ordinary men in the U.S. knew about what

the aviators were doing over here. Then the pencils—who invented them? The other party to the conversation says it's, of course, the ruling powers—no less than F.D.R. himself—who knows everything & has a hand in everything. ^{For} Yesterday's new worry was that the proprietor would have to stop serving meals; a pension near here ^{has} ~~closed~~ ¹ its dining-room because of the shortage of food. Ascanio & Leoni go out every morning searching for something, anything, to give the 20 ^{or} boarders. Each day it is harder to find anything; no fruit this week—strange for Italy. We've had prunes & cheese, I pity the people who are keeping house; they must be famished. Hotels & pensions have special favours.

JUNE 5/1943— I've been consoled by hearing on fairly good authority that the Red Cross investigated the matter of the explosive pencils & found that the Americans had nothing to do with them. I took a wicked pleasure in telling Sigr. Baravelli for I knew she'd be furious & she was. She insists it's the Jews. Another precious tid-bit I got, I dared not tell her. It seems Mussolini came here not long ago: how do you suppose he travelled? In an ambulance of the Misericordia wearing a wig, a beard & priest's robe. Too rich. An Italian ~~who~~ is anti, said: "I may have saluted the car with him in it". another report of a Naples raid from someone who was there, is that; again we machined ^{gunned} — ~~gun~~ civilians. An Italian who was in Leghorn during the bombing spoke admiringly to Miss Brogan of the accuracy of the aiming. Even the enemy admires the technique. He said that in the train coming to Florence the passengers were all talking openly of it; one objective after another was hit. ^{For} Florence had ten alarms in May; in one day we had three. It was said that the third was to cover M.'s arrival. We heard that German ~~Planes~~ ^{Planes} had been moved away from Florence at request of Archbishop Della Costa so ^{are so} we ~~the~~ much the safer.

I started the war with three predictions: that Britain would win; that we should go in; that it would last three years; also I've been of the opinion that Florence would not be bombed.

JUNE 18-1943— We live in a strange state of dullness. When we lie a ready victim to the aggressor, all apparently in life goes on

When I put Per in the mens. In paragraph
the typist has copied it!!

as usual ; we just don't realize the peril. In this backwater bay
it seems as if nothing were being done to meet it , tho' no doubt
in some quarters there are hasty preparations & nervous activity.
Many more have been called up. Par A boy born at the Alamanni^{to};
Sig. L. a grandfather. Sig. L. has just been here. Like me he does
not feel that Italy will be invaded. But unlike me he believes in
a compromise: "neither can win". I said: "Why not?" He said: "If we are
weeping , England is by no means laughing." You can gauge by this
the lack of understanding here in Italy of the situation. He has a
fine radio & often listens to the B.B.C.--

June 21 1943- We made a night of it last night. An alarm came about
2 A.M. & lasted for an hour. It did not cause much disturbance, because
we've never been bombed, & many of us think that we never will be.
I slept pretty well between the two sirens, but about 4 A.M. came ano-
ther, & a few minutes later we heard the cannon fired from Monte Oli-
veto, across the river from us, & then the crackling of a machine-gun.
That caused a general descent to the entry, I can tell you. Sig. Leo-
ni came & knocked at my door, then went on to Sig. Baravelli to ex-
plain to her that there was firing. She'd heard nothing. I staid quiet-
ly in bed. In my ignorance I thought the cannon shot was a bomb; it
sounded just like those fireworks "bombs" that explode with hundreds
of dazzling stars. However it does not seem to me that you better your-
self by going down stairs. I said my prayers & waited. Nothing
happened. This morning the waiter said the air defence had mistaken
an Italian or German plane that went over for an enemy & had fired.
~~I can tell you~~ I was thankful.

I thought the servants would be worn out & grouchy as usual after
an alarm, but they were agreeably excited by the new experience. It
seems I missed a lot by not going down stairs last night-not see-
ing the various states of deshability. After the semi-clothed had
been there for about half an hour, Sigra. Baravelli appeared on the
stairs, beautifully arranged, wearing a handsome white coat, hair
artistically arranged, coming slowly down, airily smoking a ci-

(she's 84 they say). They all wanted to laugh. Most of them melted away to avoid a long harangue from her. The funny part is that the proprietor, as Capo Fabbricato, feels himself called to drag us all out of bed & down stairs. He reproached me for not going. I wanted to say: "I'll thank a Fascist for saving me from my own bombs." If he insists I will get a doctor's certificate to say I'm not able to go. The only ones who did not leave their rooms were Miss Stanhope (in her dotage) & the Avitabile.

Just as I had thought that the Anglo-Saxons in the house were to be submerged by the Italians, we had an increase of 66/273%. Sig. Leonit told me towards the end of March that a friend of mine was to come here, named Covell. I could not remember anyone of that name. It turned out that it was a friend of my friend Contessa Maud Provana ^(an American) who was expected, Florence Covell Avitabile, born in Fall River Massachusetts (her grandfather had owned the Fall River boats plying between N.Y. & Boston). She had been a student at Smith 7 years after me. I can vaguely remember her older sister who was there when I was. You can imagine what a surprise & pleasure it was to meet a thorough-going New Englander, one of the salt of the earth. She had married an Italian artist, had lived in Paris, where her son was born at the Neuilly Hospital in 1912, then they had gone to America where a daughter was born. Finally in 1915 they decided to live in Italy & had settled in Rome. There the third baby was born: Florence. Eventually the elder daughter went to America to Smith; the son was called up & sent to Russia. Meanwhile Sig. Avitabile had died & the Sigr. left Rome to live in her villa at the sea-shore, at Forte dei Marmi. Florence had become a doctor & got a position at the Careggi Hospital here. Then came the devastating news that the son had been killed at the beginning of the retreat from Russia. It seems to me especially cruel that he, who as well as his sisters, had never been a Fascist, (even at school they had evaded as much as possible all parades of the Balilla & Little Italians) should have been compelled to fight for M. against Russia & to lose his life there. His mother could no longer endure living alone at Forte so she joined

Florence & they came to this house which was recommended by the Contessa Provana. The Sagra. is far from strong, but she has a happy^{per} temperament & is always courageous. In April 43 came some office workers from Milan. A firm there was establishing a branch in Florence as being safer from bombardment. They sent to this house 17 employees, paying a month's board. It was a great change - from that time on, the pension prospered - no more months when there were only 5 boarders, or possibly 8.

June-29- Some days ago the B.B.G. explained the situation on the early morning of June 21st. They "revealed" that the R.A.F. bombers had visited Friedrichshafen on Lake Constance about midnight & then, instead of returning to England, had set off to Africa. If you look at the map you'll see Florence is about due South of Lake Constance, so the Florence anti-air defense, were not mistaken, it was British planes passing over. I guess they weren't even aware of our 2 or 3 cannon shots & trickle of machine gunning. But we were, & it caused no end of fright & discomfort to the Florentines. The terror-stricken shrieks of the people in the street were a gruesome ^{unc}adjoint which I'd never imagined. Almost all who went to the shelters were on the way when the firing came & the scene was distressing enough. However I've heard of none wounded, though some were treated for shock & heart troubles; Armida was amongst the flock. Arriving at the shelter, she found her friend Vittoria already there, but noticed something strange in her appearance: she had forgotten her false teeth! Not a word in the papers about the alarms or the firing. ^{per} The preponderant worry ^{per} just now, aside from the food ^{per} question, is whether the Americans are to be herded in some small town away from Florence. That, to me personally, is worse than bombardment. The Government has threatened such a move, but we do not know whether to take it seriously or not.

This is a gala day, for we have oranges; you can't believe how much that means to me. We've been skimping along on cherries.

July-7/43- We have various Sicilians in the house. A young Lieutenant & his wife, small boy & baby came a while ago, with the ~~women~~

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wife's brother, who is a ~~Priest~~ ^{Lieutenant's} & the Lieut's sister. They took two rooms, ~~#####~~ on the garden. At night they left the door open between the rooms, in one of which slept the young couple & baby, in the other the Priest, the young lady & the small boy. A cosy family. The boy was a terror & ruined the garden. The mother spread the diapers to dry on the bushes. We rejoiced when they left for Rome. I leaned out of my window to see their cab drive off. Just as they went, up came another cab with another ^{Lieutenant's} wife & two babies! They took the ^{rooms} just vacated. These babies cried incessantly & the mother put up a clothes line, even in the so-called pergola. The strange thing is that while Italy is being invaded & every able-bodied man would seem to be needed at the front, the ^{Lieutenant's} orderly, (both are aviators) is acting as nurse maid to the babies. From morning to night he is on the job with the patience of Job. The mother, one of those peroxide blonds, who needs more peroxide on the stringy locks down her back, is relieved of all care. We thought we were to have them for ever, as they could find no flat, but they did find one. Meanwhile no. 1, who went to Rome, has written ^{asking} to come back. Another couple with two children (terrors) has arrived; also Sicilians. Our once so quiet house, the abode of elderly Americans, has changed indeed.

July-17/1943- ~~Now~~ The Heimlers, a Jewish family from Fiume have joined us. Once before they spent a few weeks here & the son, Emerico, got into the textile business in Prato, travelling back & forth from Florence to Rome & Fiume. Now he is on his wedding tour. His bride is a lovely girl who does not look Jewish at all. She was educated in Switzerland & speaks Croatian, German, French, Italian, & English. She visits me to keep up her English (she ^{is} reading Jean Christophe with ^{passionate} pessimist interest) These people are Italians only in name being Slaves who automatically became Italians when Italy took Fiume. The bridegroom's parents, his brother Tiburzio & his sister followed the young couple & all are in hiding here.

I had not been out for some weeks, but last night Armida & I sallied

~~spelt~~ forth to a little caffè, two short blocks away, the Curtatone, where we sat, at a table on the side walk in a quiet crowd of 20 or 30. We took "espresso" now made of barley(?) instead of coffee, but, astonishing good, with almost too much sugar. One lira a piece.

I did not want to be noticed, so we took a table against the wall in the dark. Suddenly a lamp above us was turned on. As it was 10 P.M., the hour for the black out, we asked why that light was not put out. Oh, it was darkened at top & on the sides, quite true, but it managed to make a spot of light on wall & ground, which I should think, any aviator might have seen. So we carry on here; I always think of a remark of one of the first raiders over Milan: "I guess the Italians have got tired of the black out."

We hear that a glass of water costs 3 lire in Sicily (12-15 cents) a box of matches, 15 lire.

Baronessa Cora was here this afternoon. Her husband (a Captain) says the fate of Sicily all depends on the battle when the Allies meet the regular army; they've fought only with coast guards & heretofore. If the Italians are beaten, the King could call on Badoglio.

July-20- I feel like putting on mourning for the bombing of Rome. No doubt it has military objectives, but the war could be won without bombing them & it is bad policy to intensify the hatred of the Italians & the Catholics for us. Sometime ago Churchill threatened that if Athens were bombed, we would bomb Rome. Athens was not bombed, but we've bombed Rome anyhow. However it is not Churchill who has done it; it is the Babbits of America who have no idea of or appreciation of the old world tradition & beauty.

July-23-1943- Sigr. Avitabile, who has lived in Rome for twenty years, was much calmer than I was about the bombing. She says the Romans have been expecting it for some time, since there were so many military objectives in the city or near it.

July 26-1943- Late last night (10,45)? I heard the great news that M. had fallen. I cannot yet realize it. Such a pressure is lifted from

us all .The rejoicing is apparently universal .Ascanio reports dense crowds down town; he could hardly get home ,struggling through the mass of people, & warned Armida not to go .On the streets near by, Palazzolo & Borgognisanti, women were shouting their delight. People threw their pictures of M. into the street to be destroyed. Ascanio said that if M. had been there in flesh, he'd have been torn limb for limb. I do not doubt it, having heard one mild little woman express her feelings about the sort of death he should have not a natural one nor a speedy one, but by slow torture- a new wound a day. Many sober people declared their intention of being dead drunk by evening. The gay young person ,who is supposed to be our chamber-maid, said she would be off this afternoon to celebrate; that, after Abyssinia, she'd staid out till 3 A.M. in the good cause. In the midst of the excitement came an alarm. I imagine that it was only a pretence to make the crowd disperse, as they were getting rather violent against the Fascists.

On the 24th (70) people saw the Brit. planes overhead- about 40- going, I think, to North Africa. The day after, on their way to England, they bombed Leghorn. Perhaps I've not got it right, but anyhow they bombed Bologna one day & Leghorn the next & we had the alarm both times, with the cannon & machine-guns going just as the people were on the way to the shelter. The first 20 minutes after an alarm are the dangerous ones, as the bombs frequently fall even before the alarm is heard. However it is during those 20 minutes that the poor Florentines are on the way to the shelters. They rush screaming at the cannon shots & remain in the shelters an hour or two when all is calm. It was humiliating indeed to hear on the B. B. C. that the planes on this great return trip met with no opposition- not a shot fired. All the anti-air effort was unheeded.

Probably the cannon ^{were those} ~~was that one~~ designed by Michel Angelo.

Badoglio had set up a strict military rule with the curfew at 9, to circumvent those who will want to take revenge for the beatings ^{used} up the Fascisti ~~said~~ to administer, along with doses

M

of castor oil. You can imagine how irksome it is in these the hottest day of summer to close your blinds at nine (really 8) & sit & stifle inside with very little light.

July 29. 1943

"I wish this room had a floor, I don't so much care for a door. But this groping around without touching the ground is getting to be somewhat a bore".

If I feel as if the bottom had fallen out of things, what must the Italians feel, especially the young ones who have been brought up to look upon M. as a god, and are now told he is a devil. I hear that Linda (who is just the age of Fascism) wept at M.'s flight, though she seems cheerful enough now. Sig. Leoni congratulates himself that his picture of M. fell down behind his desk 18 months ago & was never put back in place. He has talked openly against M. for some months. I supposed Sig. Baravelli to be M.'s last friend. (I told Armida to look under her bed to see she weren't sheltering her idol). However she appeared gay as ever in the entry, announcing that she had always prayed that a miracle might happen & now it had. The effrontery of the woman! We have a curfew at 9; blinds must be shut & no one can go out. Soldiers in grey patrol the streets. Just after 9.30^{three} go down the middle of the street to see if the blinds are shut, but, it is later that their fun begins; they fire their rifles constantly and even shoot off a cannon. It seemed last night like a great 4th of July, fireworks celebration; at first I thought they were skirmishing with the Fascisti, but it seems not; they only wanted to impress the citizens. After ten, if they saw a light in a window they called out: "luce" & fired. They really fired into a window that was open; it hit one woman who was peeking out.

Yesterday the crowds down town were still great. About noon came a rumor that the war was over. You can imagine the rejoicing. I fell for it as on Nov. 7 1918, & wept (for the first time in years).

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We were all cured in about a quarter of an hour, when there came an alarm. It had a sobering effect. So do Churchill's threatnings. I do think he might just at this moment use the stick less & offer us more of the carrots. It seems to me Italy is sure to surrender soon. Our paper yesterday gave an account of the meeting of the Great Council which lasted ten hours. With M's supporters turning against him, it sounded like a far off imitation of Julius Caesar-("Ingratitude more strong than traitors' arms quite vanquished him")

AUG. 2-1943- Very sinister deeds have been done beneath the surface; fascists held up & punched in the stomach, chest or back, till they spit blood; funeral wreaths have been hung on the doors of some doomed to death, or even coffins sent to their houses. Murders have been committed. This we hear in whispers-nothing appears in the papers. Indeed the papers bear just as little relation of the real life of the people, as they did when under Fascist direction. Every one clamors for peace & cannot understand Badoglio's temporizing. but Signorina Avitabile writes from Rome that peace will soon come, that Badoglio will sign the terms. She's having a thrilling time in her home city & thankful she could be back just now, even though it took her 12 hours to go, instead of 4. She went by way of Pisa & Leghorn etc. & ended at the Trastevere station. (Coming back) Anglo-American planes were over the train most of the way; at every station the alarm was sounding.) She is staying with her friend the Waldensian pastor & his wife in Piazza Cavour. An hour or so after her arrival on the 25th. the rejoicing over M.'s fall began. She could not get to sleep till 4 a.m. & was awakened at 5:30. She wanted to go out into the streets at once, but could not find anyone to go with her. ~~Finally~~ ^{when}, she did get out, it was wonderful to see the radiant faces. Perfect strangers ~~walked~~ ^{rushed} together & kissed

each other. All Fascists emblems are disappearing: some are carved into the buildings & it must take time to chisel them off. The little flat, round, Fascist buttons the men wore on their lapels (nicknamed bed bugs) have gone, but you can see the mark where they have been. Nowadays it is hard to get a new coat! She thinks that M. will be tried soon & will end before a firing squad. She says at the meeting of the Great Council there were some physical blows given as well as mental. M. went to the King & told his tale & was heard in perfect silence. They say the King is his ⁱⁿ damage, probably he didn't know what it was all about. The thing was got up by Grandi & his friends, with the army standing on back of them & was carefully prepared. When the meeting of the Council was over, M. apparently thought to start a civil war & went to the telephone: all the wires were cut. He was helpless.

Things seem to move slowly, but the people's will has been almost paralysed. They are used to submission & doing what they are told without complaint, so now they continue to submit.

AUG. 14-1943- When M. left the King, his car had disappeared & an ambulance was waiting for him. He inquired why that was. "By order of His Majesty". So there was nothing to be done. He was put into it. When he arrived at the common barracks to which they took him, he was in a state of shock, could not speak. DR. A. Vitabile was so fortunate as to know the doctor who attended him there, so heard all the details. When M. had been restored, he was in a fury & raged first at the King: "after 20 years of friendship, to treat me so."; then at the people, then at Hitler. "H. had a chance in '41 (or '42) to make peace with Russia, I told him to do so. If he had followed my advice this would never have happened."

There were no conveniences at the barracks- the officers

who received him ,apologized to 'His Excellency' for the camp bed. M. glanced at it & said it was all right for a young man, but he was old. ^{Bar} The next day he was taken away & went by stages, so as to befog the people, to the island of Ponza off Naples. To this prison he had sent years ago Nenni, editor of the Avanti. He has been released & as he Walked out, M. walked in. They saw each other, but made no sign. What a drama it all is!

Signa. Avitabile was not able to get near the devastated parts of Rome, but heard much about them. It seems 10,000 were killed in the first raid of July 19th.; 6000 were soldiers who are of course, a legitimate target, but the rest were mostly the poor who lived in the S. Lorenzo district, sometimes 15 or 20 in a room, in spite of Italy's vaunted superiority to the English slums. Men hired to dig out the victims, are off duty at 7p.m. & no matter if some one underneath is screaming for help, off they go. (All the Romans are aghast at this) The bodies put in morgues have not been buried, there seems to be no one to do it. The authority say: "Let the relatives bury them." Of course you can't stand it to go near the places, I should say our chance of escaping pestilence were slight?

One child of four was still alive underneath some ruins, but could not be reached. They gave her food through a pipe. They asked her if she was alone - "No, but the others are all asleep". Many of the survivors have no place to sleep & to prepare food; have to live like savages.

When the King went to visit the places, He was spat upon. He went on talking like an automaton: "The war is necessary. The war is necessary." The Princess was no more welcome, but the POPE, who distributed bills among the populace, had His car ~~ruined~~ ruined through the press of the crowd & had to get out, till another was sent, to take Him home.

Signa's Avitabile's father^h is buried at Verano, but she ~~could~~ could not go to his tomb, as one is not allowed to enter the cemetery.

At Rome the first 48 hours of rejoicing was a great sight. The poor people thought the fall of M. meant the end ^{of the} war. One old man had a picture of M. in the palm of his hand which he held out to passers-by as if begging, saying: "please spit on it." There was a great poster on the Corso near Roberts' representing an Anglo-Saxon attacking an Italian child with a spear. Somebody adroitly changed the head of the Anglo-S. for that of M.-It remained so for several days.

There were constant alerts at Rome; she was held up every day. ^{days} sometimes several times & obliged to go into shelters. It was dangerous to stay in the streets because of the anti-air firing, though no bombs were dropped while she was there. (July 25-Aug. 11) It seems that people living in piazza Cavour did not know of the bombardment on the 19th.-They thought it was one of the usual alarms. No running water even in Piazza Cavour, because of the broken mains. People in those parts of Rome are not worried, since they see that the aiming is good. The railway yards had been repaired after the first bombardment, hence the second. I aired my view that the English would never bomb Rome, it was the Americans. She said that was what the Romans were saying.

To-day comes the news of the second bombing of Rome & of Turin. The Sola palace in Milan (Serbelloni, where Napoleon stayed) was hit according to the paper. I do hope it escaped without much harm. I think the valuable collections had been removed. (John & Kathryn Bartlett went to tea there on their wedding tour) Par It seems that M. did visit the ruins in Rome, but not officially: he had an alert sounded, so he could go unseen & unharmed.

We wish they would hurry up & finish him off. It is danger*-

ous to leave him there in Ponza, I think. They say the Fascists are dead, but not the "pidocchi" (the lice). He's capable to ^{of} make civil war. At the Great Council he asked General Galbaito start something, but he declined saying: he did not feel well.

~~Aug. 14-1943-~~ Standing on a doorway in Rome during an alert, Florence fell into conversation with a workman, a very ordinary man, who understood the situation, saying that the Germans had begun the bombing, going over England, that Italy had helped & was now paying for it. The Radio has kept every one informed.

Aug. 24-1943- There ~~is~~^a rumour that M. has been taken to Maddalena (Sardinia). Maria, Francesco's mother, came to see me last night. She lives in a crowded district across the Arno & walks twice a day to the shop in Piazza Goldoni where she is employed. She is very sociable & talks with the customers & people on the street. There's little in the life of the people that escapes her. On Sunday July 25th. many of her neighbors took their mattresses & valises & began to climb a nearby hill. "The Americans have dropped leaflets saying that Florence will be bombed at 4 o'clock" was the cry. (Where do all these rumors start?) The poor souls toiled up the hill on that very hot day to return in the evening, explaining that the raid would be at 4 a.m.. The level-headed Maria resisted their appeals to go with them, but invited a woman who lived 2 stories above her to come down & sleep with her. Then near midnight came the great news of M.'s fall, ~~Monday morning Maria got into great crowds on her way to work, every one exuberant. The shop-keeper brought by a neighbor.~~ They went with her to listen to the Radio.

Monday morning Maria got into great crowds on her way to work, every one exuberant. The shop-keeper told her they'd shut up, so she started back home. When she got to the Piazza del Car-

mine, a policeman asked her where she was going?-"Home"-

"Well don't go through this piazza it's dangerous." She heard firing & learnt that the Fascisti in one of their centers, refused to leave & were shooting out of the windows. They had a child killed & wounded some women. She went home along another street.

Tuesday morning she was awakened by crowds before the house, exhorting people to put out white flags (for peace). She promptly hung out her sheet. Along came another group demanding the tricolor: white red & green, so she added that. Then came carabinieri ordering her to take in the white & she obeyed. When she got in the street she saw many women carrying white flags, demonstrating for an armistice. It seems that a certain number quit their work & did their utmost for the good cause but unfortunately many more went to work. The result was that the minority were put in prison for ten days. That is why Florence has been so calm. We are led to believe that Milan has done better.

It would appear that Italy could join the Allies to chase out the Germans, but alas, she is more afraid of the Germans than of the Allies, & there are so many of them all over Italy. I think that in the back of every one's mind is the thought of poison gas, & that prevents action

in the right direction. When we were invading Sicily & advancing with such rapidity, I could not understand it. Suddenly it occurred to me that the Germans were allowing us to get well into the center, in great numbers, with the intent of then overwhelming us with poison gas.

The very next morning Armida told me of a meeting of the people where an official (this was before the fall Fascism) told the people to be prepared, if possible, with gas-masks, if not, with wet handkerchief's to clap

over noise & smell, as I decided my fear must well founded.

2:30 P.M. Sep 8, 1943.

My dear: A little after half past six, Sig^{na} A. came in to say that she'd just heard over the radio that Italy had surrendered. She is ill, but staggered in & told me.

I took her back to her room & then went to tell the Acimlers, the bride & groom (in Anne's old room) there were 2 or 3 men there, elderly; one almost wept, while Mr. H. kissed my hand & his wife asked permission to embrace me!

In the hall I saw across A.B., who came into my room to hear the 7 o'clock Bulletin. The words "unconditional surrender" infuriated her so that she flounced out. Meanwhile I sat curled across the Signorina Antonelli on her terrace & she ran into her room & proclaimed the glad tidings to her family. Outside was in the surge of Texas, so fairly pleased that peace should come on the Madonna's day, the Nativity of the Virgin Mary.

Sep 11, 1943.

Last evening I went down into the lobby to watch the excitement. Every one was a little upset; we were told that the Germans would be here before morning. So they are, in the Py stations & in the Piazza San Marco. We came Maria & Francesca while I was down.

stairs. He had come from Spezia where he & his fellow
sailors had demolished their ships & stores & newspapers
& were captured by the Germans who took the city. A
^{total} ~~complete~~ stranger had provided him with trousers & a ^{shirt} ~~coat~~
so he could put off his uniform & make good his getaway.
It took him 12 hours to get to Florence (3 P.M. & 3 A.M.)
much of the time riding on the engine clinging to the
outside!

This morning a plane went over throwing down
leaflets. I saw them high, high up over the Anglo
American Hotel, like snow flakes against the blue sky,
dazzling white in the sunshine. They came down very
slowly; I watched them for over 20 minutes. People
strolled in their bicycles to the Cresima & put them up.
I was thrilled, hoping for a message from America.
But alas! those wings were, messages from Heaven
or from Home, when they touched the ground became
dirty scraps of paper declaring the armistice & the
the most disgraceful in history; saying the Italians
to fight on, saying that they would become slaves to their
former the fury of negroes, that a European victory
was at hand. It sickened me. Maria has promised to
show me an American one, a booklet with a
speech of Wilson's.

25/25/1943
He had our first bombardment this morning
about half past eleven. It was like a terrific thunder
storm; for a second, I thought it might be me, for the
sky was overcast. Though I heard the planes, I saw
nothing. Thirty six went over us, but I was collecting
my wits in case I had to go down. I trembled
with a lead ache, but it was exhilarating & rather
satisfying if you felt in the mud & under the earth
with a course.

Sep 26

The paper gives a long list of private houses de-
stroyed, of hospitals & of churches. It seems in tragedy for
the Germans, (not we did they get apparently) they hit
the greatest old English cemetery, a lovely spot near
mill where you will be the graves of Elizabeth Browning,
Mrs. Thrale, Lancelotti, etc. Not much harm was done,
but it was ironic that that should be the first victim
of Anglo-Saxon attacks.

Oct 2, 1943

120 Italian civilians were said to be killed.
One military objective was hit & badly damaged: the
Frat at Ripoli.

Our newspaper is given up to Forest of the "Duce"
He had his picture yesterday with the parachutists.
Now it would surprise that "Bibi" was a little
the worse for me.

November 3rd, 1943

All Saints' Day we had two alarms. (Gorgeous weather, 97° in sun)
About 6 P.M. Mira, the maid, came in much flustered and beside herself to announce that there were two Fascists downstairs inquiring if I had a radio. She'd lied to the hilt, but did not know how to proceed further. They had all but sworn at her because the proprietor was not there. (He was upstairs listening to the row) As I had been told that there was no escape because they had the list of radio owners at headquarters, I had to let one of them come up. He was a poor little specimen, one of those hangers-on of Fascism who in a few months' time will be working for the Anglo-Saxons as willingly. He did not take the set but announced, civilly enough, that it must be sent to the Commissariat of S.M. Novella between 7 & 7.15. Can you beat it? He would give a receipt and I would get it back!!! "La Repubblica la vuole" he said in parting. (They stole only from the Anglo-Saxons)

Everyone was so kind to me that it took away the sting of losing my radio. As yet I have not missed it, being fired out with the excitement and confusion. To show what a lovely person Signora Avitabile is she appeared this morning at my door with her little radio in her arms to lend me. I did not take it.

November 18th, 1943

Here we are settling down for the fifth winter of war, when we had been confident that Italy would be out of it by September! We ask desperately what has happened in the South to delay our advance and where is the 7th Army? All those simultaneous landings we had hopes of have not taken place and we are left high and dry in the grip of the Germans that tightens every day and with a diminishing food supply. Sometimes I've wondered if our troops were going slow to give Germany a chance to collapse. What good fortune for the north of Italy if that could happen first! Before the A.A. reached us!

As it is, perhaps this slow approach is lengthening our lives, for

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it seems doubtful if we can come through alive that dread Day when the Anglo American arrive and the Germans leave, between bombardments of the one and ⁿburying and shooting of the other. Now not a day passes without the firing of cannon off and on. In good weather we have alerts - three in a day. Could there be a horridier sound than the siren? Inexorable, merciless it screeches.

Early this month some Jews here in Florence were taken away, destination unknown, with only what they stood up in. One was a man of 78, another a young woman with her little girl; she was expecting a baby shortly. Her husband had gone away on business for a few days, so she was unprotected. Also we knew of an American woman who was taken, but I have not heard who she was or why she was taken.

Our great fear has been that they might want this house for Germans. The boarders at the Anglo-American (now Regina) had to clear out in 3 days, among them the Cora who have lived there for 30 years. You can imagine the accumulation of clothes and other belongings! Fortunately they found shelter at the Constantine (where I was in 1934) but only one room for the couple and three dogs! The 19 trunks and boxes had to be stored.

I heard of the hotel being taken over just as my radio left and I said that I had nothing to complain of, so long as I could stay by my own fireside.

The Germans have taken the Grand Hotel (which has been closed during the war), the Baglioni, and the first floor of the Consigli Pension.

It is wonderful how well we still live. The food is less this month, but still appetizing. Florence A. was invited Sunday to lunch at the Excelsior and found the menu about the same as here: chicken, a vegetable, polenta (like our boiled mush with a sauce) and an apple, but that the portions were smaller than here. Everything comes from the black market. I do not see how the poor exist. Eggs are L. 7.-; butter 2 l.- for 100

I have bought a tiny electric heater for 2.00 to boil water.

I'd be forlorn without the Avitabile, the kindest people on earth. Twice they have brought in their radio set and left it for a day. If any one in the house is ill, the young Dottoressa is called in. Last week an attractive young lady had three hemorrhages in two days and the Doctor was devoting herself to her even acting as nurse, till she could find one free. Of course the patient was scared stiff and most of the other boarders flocked to see her - out of morbid curiosity. The doctors (she had two) turned them out but they always came back. Naturally the Proprietor does not want the girl here, but she's determined not to go to a sanatorium. The case is complicated by Signor Parenti, her constant visitor. As the name means relative, we were all deceived and called him her uncle, but it seems it is a tenderer tie that binds them and for that the Proprietor wants to get rid of her. The poor girl lived at Rapallo but moved to Milan not long ago, where she took a flat and furnished it. One morning she emerged from a shelter to find she'd lost everything. Her first emotion was one of intense thankfulness to be alive! Bad luck pursued her to Florence where she had news that her nephew had been taken by the Germans. That was the day she fell ill. However he escaped and she is now doing well.

One of the people in the house who has been very kind to her is Signora Illic (pr. Eklitch) a Viennese, the widow of a Yugoslav. She came from Spalato bringing a tremendous lot of luggage and three sons, Ivan 16 years old and twins of 14. She told someone that it was interesting to see how the other half lived; that after the war she would return to her own milieu. I am dazzled by the aplomb of a person in Europe who can speak confidently of the future! The Signora sends the invalid a great deal of food, including hearty breakfasts, such as are unknown in this house. She is rather a crank, has some sort of a gadget she suspends over a sick person to discover the cause of illness. She took the Dottoressa aside, saying that oftentimes the layman sees more clearly than the professional, so "I can tell you the

the Signorina had not T.B., the trouble is in her neck, perhaps cancer!" Apparently the whole household is of her opinion and there is no more talk of a Sanatorium.

December 15th, 1943

Ever since the peril of German occupation came near, we have kept the front door closed and locked (front doors here are big and thick, about 12 feet high and arched and suggest those of a fortress), lest the glories within should be seen. All enter by the service door. I feel well protected when the door clangs and I fancy the drawbridge is drawn up too. The service door is about 60 feet further down the street, but it is just a hole in the wall, opening on a poky passage which leads to the kitchen. About Thanksgiving time two German officers came to ask for eleven beds for Germans. They, instead of being taken to our dignified salon, were kept standing in the entry, dark and none too clean. (The four servants are overworked) while the Proprietor used his wiles on them: the house was full as an egg - refugees, evacuees, bombed out, old people with senile dementia down to a baby of two, born in a concentration camp in Abyssinia; then followed compliments on their Italian; he was a prisoner of war in the last unpleasantness, etc. etc. Well, the Lion fighting for his cuba won out and they went away never to return. We all extolled him to the skies. We are panic-stricken at the thought of leaving, as it is so hard to find a place. I finally pulled myself together and faced facts: that probably there was always room at the top - I'd find a roof somewhere. But of course there is constant danger - we live dangerously. It is taking it out of the proprietor, alas! He looks old and drawn.

The other day - 16th - when I was feeling peaceful enough, in came Signora Avitabile with a budget of bad news: Churchill had pneumonia; we were in danger of being turned out; a trial of poisonous gas was being made; Innsbruck, that beautiful little city, had been bombed.

Again this week the Avitabile have lent me their radio so I had the pleasure (?) of hearing that we had scarcely budged on the bay of Gaeta since November 10th. Many were the rumors of being liberated before Christmas, but we hear less of them now.

December 20th, 1943

When I was writing in the last letter of our great front door being closed day as well as night, at that very time it was opened because the Duchessa di Lante della Rovere, an American, could no longer stand using the service door and having her friend Mrs. Nelson Gay come to see her in that way! As the Proprietor apparently has no use for either of them and says he'd be glad to have the Duchessa go (she is no end of a nuisance with no esprit de corps; she refused to give up her ration cards to him, as the rest of us do so that he can plan for us all together); after all this I was surprised to hear that he'd yielded to her reiterated demands. Well, the very day after the door was opened, in came some German officials, asked to see the whole downstairs, pronounced it much nicer than the other pensions and wanted to buy it. (Paper money is plenty). Actors from Germany were coming to entertain the wounded and this would be just the place for them for two months. You can imagine the flutter in the dovecote! We hardly slept till it was decided. The Proprietor gained another victory.

December 26th, 1943

A nice present from the Proprietor was having hot water on Christmas! We can always have pitchers of it brought to our rooms (boiling, too) but it has to be painfully lugged by the over-worked servants.

On Christmas Eve, Christmas day, and the 26th small towns about us were bombed. We had the alarm. On Christmas Eve it came just as the Pope was broadcasting. I am agin it.

Some more German Officers came to say we'd have to take six Germans a night. They put three beds in each of two rooms in the annex. The

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soldiers do not eat here and use the back stairs and kitchen entrance, so we see nothing of them. They go to the Constantine for meals, much to the disgust of Baronessa Cora who sits near them in the dining room.

One night after eleven I was just getting into bed when some of them opened the door into our hall from the annex. The house was all abed, so they began to halloo to get some attention. I was rather frightened. Soon the proprietor, the man, the maids appeared. It seemed that two soldiers who had spent the night before here and had gone away, unexpectedly came back to find their beds occupied. They were put in a maid's room after wild hustling, so we had eight that night.

At the Constantine each German soldier has 1/2 lb. of butter, and good butter not the rancid stuff we've been having.

Here's to a Happy New Year to you all, my dears.

I shall be thinking of you as ever.

January 2nd, 1944

There was much noise here on new Year's Eve, it sounded like cannonading. Probably it was our Masters celebrating. By the way, an American woman said to the Baroness Cora: "We are a lot better off since the Germans came, don't you think so?" The Baroness gave a hearty negative and the other continued: "But don't you think Hitler is a wonderful man?" That makes my blood boil! Alas; there seem to be more such Americans than those of our sort.

In this house we had a mild celebration. They put up a screen in the dining room for moving pictures and the Signora Ilie showed those she had taken in Italy, very beautiful they say. Then she showed pictures of her Villa near Vienne, a princely domain. She had to sell it when the war came, or rather "give it away for only \$150,000." They moved to Spalato and lived in her husband's palace. That has been bombed. Signora Heimler told me about the pictures and added, "I could scarcely enjoy them, knowing

what pleasure it would have given you to see them." Signora Illic did not stay down to the midnight supper but gathering her sons and Signorina D (the T.B.) took them up to feast in her room saying "those people are not out sort." Little Miss D must have been bewildered.

How I should like to be wishing you Happy New Year and what is more, seeing how you all are! You must find it pretty irksome not to be able to move about. Here it is almost impossible: a man has arrived from Rome, 25 hours on the way instead of 4! He said there was constant excitement and shooting in Rome. Bicycles are no longer allowed, because the "Communists" would ride alongside a bus and shoot the Germans in it. How business can be carried on without bikes, I don't know.

January 9th, 1944.

Signor Leoni has paid 500 lire for 34 chili of salt. By great good luck he managed to wangle 100 chili of oranges - from the Germans. (They were served us a dozen times, I think.)

Early in the afternoon a camion and trailer drove up to the little coal and cement depot opposite and a German officer, bossing a dozen Italians, took off sacks of cement. Wasn't I raving?

Just received a notice to pay my radio tax. What irony since the Powers that Be lifted it over two months ago! I had to pay it, too.

On the 13th and 14th bombs were thrown near the Excelsior and the station. It was said a fascist was killed and two Germans wounded. We are now punished by having the curfew at 7 instead of 11; patted on the head by the "Nazione" for previous good behavior.

On the 17th at 8 A.M. a Red Cross ambulance came to take Signora Illic to the hospital with a mysterious disease which proved to be typhoid, temperature 41° (105). On the 18th in the evening there was an Anglo-American air raid in the outskirts of Florence. I saw great flares from window, almost like Chinese lanterns hanging in the sky.

January 29th, 1944

The hospital at Careggi has been taken over by the Germans. Paying patients can stay where they are, but the poor have to be crowded into one ward with one W.C. and one wash bowl for 30 persons. To move to their new quarters they had to go down two flights of stairs and up two others. (elevator not running) The scene of removal was pandemonium. One patient who was going home fainted on the stairs and remained there ten minutes while Germans were going up and down and a doctor was trying to get his precious paraphernalia down stairs wrapped in a sheet. Poor Doctor Florence was so tired she could not sleep that night.

Of course we're worried for fear they'll take this house. Signor Leoni came in last evening to say the authorities had telephoned all pensions yesterday asking number of rooms, salons, etc. He had appealed to his friend to persuade them that they'd better take over big hotels where the guests were transients and able-bodied, rather than small places full of the old and sick who'd have to be taken care of some place anyhow. This house is always full up; always six beds taken by Germans, (privates or sergeants) who change every night. Usually they do not have their meals here, but occasionally they do, when they are served in their rooms.

We've not had meat since the 23rd. No one is entitled to it more than once a week, but we, shameless lot that we are (in hotels and pensions) have had it twice a day. We begin to hear the footfalls of the wolf. I've instigated Arnide to begin a desperate hunt for flour, rice, lard for herself. My windfall comes in handy. It seems a topsy-turvy world where money means little.

An English plane dropped a bomb on San Gervasio, in the outskirts of Florence on an empty field, where people had gone for safety; 20 were killed. It is thought that the pilot was trying to go home and could not rise until he rid himself of a bomb; that he considered the open space a

good place to let it go without hurting anyone. The first clarionet player of the orchestra was among the killed with his father, wife and child. A boy of six survived. Themistocle Pace. The alarms keep on, sometimes three a day, though Florence itself has not been bombed. "They say" it is an open city. For three days we did not hear the sirens, yet Anglo-American planes went over. At last I saw them well from my window about 2 p.m. in formations of 4 going east, very high: one of the most depressing sights I ever saw: their steady unswerving advance (they might have been dots in the sky so stable and even stationary they seemed to be) exemplified the might of man - a force as irresistible as the tides of the sea or processions of ants. A crushing, overpowering force that dominates a world I shall be glad to leave. At least I feel so sometimes!

January 30th, 1944

A.B. has taken to the innocent amusement of reading bound volumes of Munsey's over thirty years old. She finds them in the house library and passes them on to us. After a dose you feel as if full of snips and snails and little dogs' tails.

One article on medicine and surgery in the U.S. she thought just the thing for the young doctor. "If she's going to America after the war, it will be nice for her to know what we've done there." (It was written before the doctor was born.) I tried to dissuade her but in vain. It ended in our having a real quarrel over it. Of course, I wanted to prevent her from being a figure of fun as well as from pestering the overworked doctor, but also, I'll have to confess, I was not sorry to interrupt a violent intimacy. When I first came to the house she considered me and my room fair game, then there arose a coolness, partly because of our different politics. In two years, perhaps, she never visited me. Probably she considered it bad policy to be friendly with an anti-fascist. It was during that period that in the

garden on a Fourth of July she said with clenched teeth "I could denounce you!" (for listening to the English radio). There was a glint ~~of~~ almost of madness in her eye and I was afraid of her. *I had told her that I had just lived the Declaration*

Now I am in high favor but I can't stand her running *in*, which *Independence* sometimes lasts an hour, filled not with conversation (you can never converse with her), but with a monologue to which you have to give unblinking attention. I sometimes interlard it with flippant remarks which she does not hear, as for example:

A.B. "I am much larger-minded than you; I am not influenced by patriotism; I am just, I stand above all peoples."

F. "A wonderful woman"

A.B. "I look down on all, all are equal to me."

F. "You must be God himself."

A.B. "I see more people than you, but you know more about them."

F. "Never stop talking to listen."

A.B. "I know news"

F. "Of your grandfather."

A.B. "You know gossip. You get the discrimination?"

After this and a minute description of an operation for appendicitis, she expects to be urged to sit in my sunshine for an hour longer. She is to be pitied. One of these octagenarians who cannot forget the glories of half a century ago. She queened it, or fancied she did, in her drawing room in Cairo, her husband a delightful Italian, a rising young man taken in hand by Lord Cromer. She sang and her husband played her accompaniments. From a handsome woman in that position with great aplomb and a ready Irish wit, monologues might go down or perhaps she had less time for them, life was fluid; now it's congealed in this one form.

February 1st, 1944.

There was a fire in the Riccardi top floor. According to the "Nazione" it caught from a cigarette stub, but the people think it was an attack on Manganiello, who is Chief of Province and holds out there (Prefettura). However the artistic glories were not damaged.

The wounded are pouring into Florence. The alerts (27th and 30th) were perhaps to get people off the streets so they would not see the victims of frost bite from Russia.

February 10th, 1944

The 9th was about the worst day we have had. First a bombardment of the environments of Florence, which sounded pretty near. The planes (47?) passed over us. I heard the motors, but could not see many of them; only 2 squadrons of 5 flying very high towards the West or N.W. A villa was struck where the prima donna Lina Cavalieri was staying, having left Rome for safety. She among others was killed.

We had the excitement of seeing a group of about 30 S.S. men from the A - A., standing or kneeling on the sidewalk opposite, one crouching in a doorway, pointing their rifles at the planes, flying very low. But the men did not fire.

In the midst of this, two German Officials appeared to consider taking over this pension. The Proprietor had to show them all the downstairs. They went off, but returned. Finally they said they'd try to find a smaller place as they wanted room for only 28 officers. They did not come back. Once more the Lion (Leoni) has defended his cubs. They had been to the Pension Beacci and said Signora B. was like a wild beast!

But by far the worst of the day was the departure of the Heimlers. In the six or seven months they have been here, they have made themselves conspicuous in the neighborhood, always in the street, frequenting a pastry shop to consume endless cakes and amusing themselves regardless of their status. I occasionally cautioned the young men not to be so much

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in evidence. Of course, it is hard for them to stay at home all day, but even the mother was always on the go. Their presence was no small strain on the proprietor who was liable to be shot for lodging Jews. It shows the solidarity of feeling here that no one informed on them. They spent much time in the lobby, ready to betake themselves off to the annex if a stranger appeared, as they did when the Fascists came to confiscate my radio! They finally rented a flat nearby and were moving in, when some inquiries were made about them, which turned their blood to water. In a few hours they were off, to Rome they said, but it was in the Milan station that someone from here saw them.

The elder son came to my door weeping to kiss my hand in farewell. Then came his wife and brother both quite composed. They bade each other good bye in my room, as the family was travelling in two or three groups. Thus we were relieved of the six Heimlers; their eight relatives and friends left the next day. (After some weeks we heard through underground channels that the whole party had safely crossed the frontier into Switzerland. Some American Association passed many Jews across, gaining over the guards at the frontier at a price! The rich had to pay the eyes out of their head but the poor went for nothing.)

February 15th, 1944

Each day has its new worry, which we survice and by the next dawn, have forgotten. One night the Germans left two great trucks in front of the house, right under my window. Each had twenty great cans (like big barrels) of gasoline. In fear a hand bomb would be thrown at them, three guards were posted at each end of the block, and two across the way. We knew nothing of all this till the early morning when one of the guards came to the service door begging to come in and get warm; it happened to be the coldest night of the winter. Signor Leoni said had been aware of our dangerous plight, he'd not have slept a wink

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I think that was the day our wood gave out, partly because he'd insisted we did not need much more this year with fifty boarders than last year with eight! Also our primadonna has burned over 100 chili some days unrestrained. Well, once again the Proprietor did the impossible and found wood, so all is serene in that respect.

We'd scarcely taken a long breath when the A.A. bombed Prato again, ~~a town to the north~~ a town to the north, leaving women and children dead in the streets. Then yesterday was announced, so they said, by the English radio, a bombardment of Florence between 11 and 2. As the bombardment of the environs had been similarly announced (or so it was said) I took this rather seriously and got my things together, put on my coat and hat ..and nothing happened!

February 21st, 1944

No hope of ever seeing Lujunice again. The radio sets collected at the Commissariat of S.M.V. were removed to the Prefettura from where they were taken to Germany.

We've had two Austrians mixed in with the Germans. One night they discovered that the room next them had been vacated and made signs to the maid that they wanted their beds put there, saying, "Vienna;" they were fed up with the other.

March 8th, 1944

Ten people left so we have breathing space. Monday the Proprietor took on a wedding breakfast of 23 covers. As the few servants cannot begin to give us good service, it meant that for that day I had no breakfast, no newspaper and did my room myself. We were treated to some little cakes like very poor cookies.

The police suddenly descended on Mrs. Swartz about the middle of February and told her she must leave in two hours' time. She is an American, a handsome buxom blonde, rendered doubly conspicuous by her Boston terrier and her darkey Mammy, the only one in Florence. The absence of such a blooming person here where all A.S. under 70 were

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ordered to depart has been a mystery, explained by her being protected by the Church in the person of a Monsignore. Now that the Church is not in high favour in Fascist circles, I suppose they decided to send her packing. She and the darkey were separated, which seems pure deviltry. One is said to be in Reggio Emilia. I should feel more sympathy for their plight if I did not know that Mrs. Swartz was a staunch pro German, even reported to be wearing a button bearing the legend "God curse the English."

March 14th, 1944

On the morning of the 11th Florence had an air raid. The bombs were aimed at the railway and, on the whole, well aimed though many were the casualties. It is said that Germany had collected 200 big engines here. Well, only 47 were intact after the raid; also some sort of station at Rifredi was put out of action. Unfortunately a baby hospital was hit and the great hospital at Careggi a little damaged. Our little Dottoressa was standing in the door of the hospital watching the planes go over. They flew so low that the doctor with her saw a bomb being unhooked and shouted for her to go in. The concussion threw her on the floor and she slid along almost to the door leading down to the shelter. She went down for a few minutes to get her breath, then went up to see her patients. All but four had gone to the shelter. Of the four, one was under his bed and three in the doorway. She made them as comfortable as possible and went on to the others.

That was the first wave of bombing, the second was nearer us, about half a mile away; the noise was terrific and the window shook so that I knew I must open it, my knees also shook so that it was difficult to get there, and fearful to think of opening it, but I did. We heard the planes over us and people across the street could see them, but I could not. (Also, I was in the midst of my morning toilet and had mislaid the towel!)

The paper gives the number of deaths at 94- 26 were in the Villa Flora, including 3 nurses, the janitor and cook.

March 16th, 1944

Mollie Brogan is a dear Irish girl, one of ten brothers and sisters, some of whom still live in their place in the country in Ireland with their mother who is hale and hearty at 80. Mollie herself has been in Florence for 30 years giving lessons in English conversation and incidentally making friends with all sorts of people. Jolly and good company, she is one of those selfless persons to whom it is natural to be doing for others; English prisoners, who have escaped, Jews in hiding find a friend in her; she lends her stove to a poor boy who has rheumatic fever, makes a rice pudding for another unfortunate. Probably her devotion is not unknown to the police, for she told me how one cold midnight two or three came to her flat to accuse her of signalling with a lamp to someone across the Arno. She lives on the top floor of an old palace by the Ponte Vecchio whose foundations go down into the river. She had to show the police all over her domain, but they found nothing incriminating.

She called on me one day in February, promising to come again the first Sunday in March. She did not turn up, but as it was a cold blustery day, I wasn't disturbed about her. However when she failed to appear on the second Sunday I was worried. Armida's sore foot prevented her from starting a search. I tried to stir up Florence Avitabile but I could see she thought I was unreasonable. Finally she did get Miss B's place by telephone and was answered in cryptic words by the landlady, who consented to receive her next day, but when F. went there she could not get in. By this time the Avit. and I were most anxious. I tried to remember the name of acquaintances Miss B. had mentioned. The only one I could recall (except Miss Forde, who could be of no use to us

Signora Illic, the mother of the three boys here who had typhoid and then bronco-pneumonia and was given up by the doctors, surprised them by recovering. She has been convalescing at a nursing home "Villa Flora" near the tracks. After the first wave her sons had telephoned the Villa Flora and all was well. Then Signor Leoni went up on the roof and came down to tell the boys that it looked as if that region had been hit. The oldest (17, he looks like King Peter) went up to the place and saw it was almost all destroyed. Instead of rushing around to see his mother's window or trying to get in, he came back to town to the Hotel Excelsior and told a German officer there that his mother was in a villa that had been hit, to come and help. Then he bought calming medicines to give to his brothers in case their mother were killed!!! On the way back to the villa he met a German officer in a little auto and told him to stop. "Take me to the Villa Flora." He did so. Only then he discovered that ~~the~~ about the only room not destroyed was his mother's! She had left her bed and was sitting in an armchair by the window in nightgown and wrapper when the door and other debris were blasted onto the bed! The helpers found her and took each a leg and carried her out, (she said she was entirely exposed) and dumped her on a ruin. Then her son brought her home in the German auto. I had just heard from our maid that the Villa Flora was destroyed, when I looked out of the window and saw the Signora coming in! You can imagine the excitement and joy here. She said she knew now she would not die.

Unfortunately many patients in the villa did die. The doctor was caught under the ruins where he lay between two bodies for eight hours, quite conscious and hearing all the comments of the diggers. Our doctor gave him oxygen and helped all she could and kept the men working till all past eight p.m. when they got him out. At midnight he died, leaving wife and two babies.

being in Fiesole) was Marchesa Viviani. We found three of that name in the telephone book and had the good fortune to choose the right one, who lives in a fine palace in the Via Tornabuoni. F. has called on her and she has confirmed our fears: Mollie is in prison. A friend takes her food every noon, has been doing so since almost the first day, March 4th. Armida is now able to take packages of food up many flights of stairs to the friend who occasionally sees Mollie and finds out what she needs most. She can eat but little of the prison fare, but has firm friends who lavish gifts upon her, many of which she passes on to her fellow sufferers. Someone gives her a bottle of real milk every day! No one knows of what she is accused or how long her durance will last. We live in dread for her.

A bit of gossip about the Marchesa Viviani. Her mother was the mistress of King Umberto and she is his daughter. He left a considerable property to them in the via Tornabuoni. She married well and her daughter, a beauty, is the wife of a Visconti di Modrone of Milan.

March 17th, 1944

This has been about our worst week, saddened by the raid of the 11th. We have been without gas for three days and out of wood; now we have gas again and a great truck of wood has come. I had existed with pine cones and coke, warm enough whilst I was bending over them and blowing them. Of course I had another cold in the head, but not a serious one.

Bicycles are not allowed in town since so many fascists have been killed by men on wheels. As the bicycle is the most common way of getting about, it upsets everybody, more or less. The Germans have taken all the taxis. Curfew is at 8. We are still pretty well nourished in this house as shown by the cat's bringing forth four very lively kittens - in the linen closet.

Did I tell you that I had a Red Cross message from the James

otices, written August '42? Only 19 months on the way! They seemed to be flourishing, both over 80 now. Nothing from Tucson or Pasadena.

March 25th, 1944

On the 23rd we had another raid. They aimed at the Campo di Marte (Field of Mars) the other side of the town. They are said to have destroyed 193 buildings, badly damaged 80, slightly damaged between 200 and 300. Some were villas, some houses of the poor, some modern apartment buildings.

The noise here was not so bad as on the 11th but bad enough. I've not heard whether any military objective were hit. There was a wind, which ought to have made them stay at home. On that day and the one before four important cities, noted for their art treasures were bombed. Florence, Bologna, Verona and Padua.

But a still crueler thing happened: 30 boys who had not enrolled for the new Fascist army were stood up in line and shot, the oldest 23. They say the men who were ordered to shoot them, refused and finally the militia did it. The boys were not ever allowed to see their parents to say good bye. Then the German commandant interfered and said no more men were to be shot - that they were not traitors.

April 4th, 1944

The Illic have all left us, for a place on the Viale Michelangelo, sort of a pension where German nurses stay. The cook is a good one and as the Illic buy great quantities of food, they now can get it cooked for them instead of mussing up their rooms as they did here. Our portions are hardly enough for a robust person. The three boys, when their mother left for the hospital, cooked for themselves at odd times all day and smeared jam over everything. However, I am very sorry to have such a picturesque family leave. If you could have seen their baggage! The van for part of it stood under my window so I am not to

blame if I saw it. It was a big one and full of the biggest, longest trunks I ever saw in my life. I presume some were 50 years old. One fell the whole length of the stairway. I suffered as much as during a raid, for I thought it was a person and that he'd be killed. She is an aristocratic Viennese and had a gorgeous place there (24 rooms); her husband was a Slav and had a beautiful castle at Spalato which has been bombed. Did I tell you she believed in astrology? The horoscopes of the twins were so different that she was puzzled, but she decided that the 15 minutes between their births accounted for it. "There is always satisfaction" she told Florence, "in discovering a scientific truth." Where she has gone to there is a doctor who kisses her hand so she feels in her element.

April 8th, 1944

Last night the evening fireworks were much nearer us than usually. Hand bombs and guns went off in our street and one seemed just under my window. It was terrific and I retired towards my bathroom in fright though I wanted to look out. When I did open the window two minutes later the street lay deserted and calm in the moonlight. They say the rebels and republicans were having a street fight much as every night.

I went out into the hall to hear what people were saying in the lobby. Up came A.B. and I asked her about it. She explained to me that the Fascists and Anti-Fascists did not like each other and she guessed they were fighting! Maria came yesterday and gave me a piece of a loaf of bread given her by her employer. The first time I ever ate rye bread with gusto.

At the corner of the A.A. stands a guard with a rifle, day and night; another is posted at the other corner, they say, because the bodies of two of the Germans who live in the A.A. were found in the Arno after being shot.

April 15th, 1944

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We had a lovely Easter dinner. Never have I eaten more delicious roast chicken or better cooked. The jelly roll (a great treat) left something to be desired. However we had to have several lean days before and after our feast.

April 20th, 1944

The goose hangs high with a happy issue of Miss Brogan's affliction, her liberation and return home. Her first week in prison was spent in a room with common malefactors. She met a girl, young and fresh-looking, who had killed her fiancé and a woman who had committed 278 abortions. After that she was put in with political prisoners, many charming women. A little sun came into the room she shared with five others. She had a bed (inhabited) and nothing else. The days were spent in conversation; it was all they had to do. She was there six weeks - Mar. 4th to Apr. 15th - had the luxury once of a bath! Strange to say she is in pretty good health. Of course most happy to be at home. She goes every day to the prison to take food to the friends she left there. For the present she will not go to see her English and American friends, out of regard for them. She never was told why she was in prison; never had a trial.

May 1st, 1944

About the middle of April the Waldensian pastor went down to Rome. There is no communication by train, so he took a bus. A man on top watched out for planes and when he saw any, the bus stopped and the passengers ran for shelter, if any. They saw wrecks of autos all the way; the one before his was hit and the one after, but his got through.

Rome was sad enough; the rich giving all they have for food. What the poor do can be imagined!

But even worse is the condition politically. As a reprisal for the killing of German Officials, the authorities take citizens at random on the street, lead them to the pyramid of Cestius and shoot

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them. No notice is given their families. A man simply disappears and no one knows what has become of him. An undertaker told the pastor that he alone had about ten bodies a day brought him naked and unidentified. From the hands he knew they were in higher walks of life, at least not manual workers.

We've had lovely spring weather, sometimes quite hot in the sun. I've felt some days as if it were the Fourth of July, there's been an holiday air of leisureliness, people standing around looking up to see the planes pass over, while in the distance anti-air guns and hand bombs suggested mammoth fire crackers.

One day I did not go to the window when I first heard the planes and by the time I got there, they had passed, but had left a beautiful pattern on the deep blue sky, of white vapor like ribbons, some straight, some undulating, almost like letter S's. They extended over perhaps 90° of the vault. While I was looking, along came 23 planes going in the same direction. These black specks against the sky pursuing an undeviating path reminded me of the processions of ants that used to pass through my rooms aux Vallergues from the garden to the corridor - a menace, inevitable, ineradicable.

May 2nd, 1944 - noon

It is exactly 24 hours since I was obliged to lay down my pen. Airplanes were suddenly audible over us. There were small white clouds which covered them most of the time, so I saw none, but in looking for them I saw a rain of bombs, apparently on the roof of the Anglo-American hotel - a wicked sight. They were not large, as I had always imagined them, but small and numerous. I can't really estimate how many, perhaps 20, perhaps 50. It was all in the flash of an eye. I soon realized that they did not hit the hotel but a building behind, perhaps the Opera house. Then came billows of magnificent dark grey smoke.

We had several waves of bombing. I think three. The next block

(towards the park) of the via Montebello became dense with smoke and out of it ran wild grotesque figures, their clothes and their black hair white with plaster dust. Probably many ran in silent agony, but there were enough vociferous ones to give the impression of a shrieking mob; one girl especially howled like an animal as she ran, turning to look back. A man with his arm around her tried to calm her. A man on a bicycle called out: "a child is dead in the street;" others spoke of the dead. All this to the accompaniment of crashing glass in our own house. I hope never to be nearer hell - and it was my people who brought it.

Signor Leoni stood at our front door with a bottle of Cognac, offering a glass to the most tottery old ones; one I saw could hardly hold the glass she trembled so. But that was true of us all. My writing still shows the effect of the shock. I stayed in my room but at the worst dared not be near the window for splinters were flying about. I was inclined to retreat as far as possible into the bath room but I knew that those walls were the weakest and might give away first if the house were hit. For a ghastly moment I stood in the centre of my room like a stag at bay not knowing where to turn.

You will say I was a fool not to go to the cellar, but I did not feel equal to three flights of stairs (the electric current was shut off, so the elevator did not run), to the underground dampness, and above all to encountering the hysterical crowd. I was the only one in the house who stayed in her room except the poor little English woman with a senile dementia.

Soon it was over and the dear Dottoresca came to see how I fared. I told her she must never do that again, leave her mother to come upstairs, for we still had not had the "danger past" signal. She and her mother

had never gone down before, but this time did it for the sake of a baby. A little woman, not much more than 20, the wife of an Italian officer, had come to Florence bringing a boy a year old, to have another baby, which is now three weeks old. They room next the A's. Yesterday morning she started out with the boy, leaving the nurse girl with the baby. When the bombing commenced she was not far from home, but instead of coming back, she went to a shelter. Meantime the nurse girl rushed screaming into the A's rooms. Signora Avitabile asked where was the baby. She'd left it in the room. No, she couldn't go back into the room! Can you beat it! So Mrs. Avitabile, who is over sixty and frail, had to take the baby and the crying girl down into the basement. Of course we worried for fear the mother was in danger. She was worrying about the baby and came home after an hour or two with hysterics!

Dr. Florence had to spend some time treating Mira, our maid, who had hysterics and fainted. Signora Bava and A.B. were in the garden. Mrs. Bava threw herself in A.B.'s chest for protection (according to A.B.) while splinters fell all about them. Signor Bava was down town and heard it said that the A.A. had been hit, so he was very anxious.

They were having a rehearsal in the Opera house when it was struck. Some of the singers were staying here. The mother of a young soprano, at the first bombing rushed downstairs and out the front door, screaming: "my daughter, my daughter." In spite of Signor Leoni's remonstrances she started off for the opera house. It was not very long before the daughter came down the street calling: "Mamma!" All the rest had subsided to the cellar, so I yelled to her that her mother had gone over to look for her. Of course she immediately set off again. I was rather uneasy for fear I'd done wrong in sending her into danger. When they both finally came home it was a decided relief. I believe no one was injured in the Opera house. It is an old institution of Florence.

Mamma and I heard "Il Trovatore" there in 1898. About 12 years ago it was made over and a wonderful stage apparatus installed. It took so much room that the house extended up on the via Solferino side like a skyscraper; hideous. When I was at the Constantine I swore at it for cutting off the sun and the view. Just three days ago Baronessa Cora was here and we agreed what a nuisance it was. It rather resembles a factory and possibly the aviators took it for such, or for the sort of engine repair works they were after. Ever since the tracks were bombed on March 11th, the Florantines have said that that would be the next objective, being the only one of its kind left in Italy. It is near the Park, not far from the end of Via Montevello, our street, 750 meters from us. They got the repair shop yesterday, but did not demolish it, so we worry for fear the agony will be repeated. Since I have seen their work in Florence I have not much opinion of the aiming of our airmen.

Armida lives near it. We saw nothing of her but I knew she'd be in a shelter. Her niece came here twice to enquire about her. Finally she turned up, about lunch time. Strange wasn't it? that we had a good lunch and not much after the usual hour. That shows the stuff Fortunata is made of. The waiter Gino is terribly afraid, but he worked just the same. Came in with a tragic face. How blessed are we who have the British phlegm! Some could not eat, but I felt a great void and ate quickly, so when Armida came I had little to give her, but put on water to boil an egg. However she did not want it, for Mrs. Avitabile couldn't eat and gave Armida her lunch. She was interrupted in the middle ^{by} of another alert, the third, but came back to finish. She found her flat intact, except for two broken panes and dust inches deep. As soon as the siren blew after the second alert, in came Maria, and Francesco to look me up. The Waldensian pastor came for the A's, so ^{they} said we'd always have some one to dig us out! Quite important as

~~Quite important~~ as the workmen are said to stop at 7 p.m. no matter how many lie beneath the masonry. After a rest I went about four to sit in the A's balcony. It was a sad sight. Two houses near the end of the street, opposit each other had been demolished and were burning. One was two doors from the Pension Chapman where Frank Ford and Harriet Stone stopped in 1931. (The next spring Harriet was back there.) The Carabinieri roped off the street at the corner by the A.A. and only residents and workers were allowed to go up. A squad of 14 with spades appeared about an hour after the bombing; also various Red Cross ambulances. Till dusk there was an endless procession of people carrying their belongings away, some few with cabs, one or two with autos, but mostly with hand carts. "But for the grace of God there goes Frances O," I kept saying to myself.

I was anxious to know about the Constantine, and Florence went over to see before she ate her lunch. She couldn't reach it, but saw it still stood as well as two houses next.

It appears that the loss of life was not great; perhaps thirteen. The day had its funny side. Ascanio was always in the street gesticulating and explaining events to an interested audience. He looked like a Bromio.

About six I returned to my room hoping to rest till dinner time but in came A.B. (for the second or third time) and thought it an opportune moment to give me the history of both her grandfathers!

May 2nd, 1944 - 9 P.M.

I was roused from my nap about 3 by the siren and immediate bombing: Criminal negligence on the part of the watchers, which must have caused many unnecessary casualties. At least 3 waves of bombing ensued; then I saw 18 planes going off towards the south west. Florence A. came to see me and then went back to her mother. We thought it was

over, but no, the planes returned and gave us another dose. They had hit the works good and plenty and great volumes of almost black smoke belched forth at the end of the street and were carried by the wind towards the N.E. back of the house. (This continued for three hours) Of course it may burn for days.

In the midst of all Armida appeared at our front door. She'd not had time to get to the shelter and was in her own house on the stairway when the bombing began. Not being accustomed to hearing it (in the shelter you don't hear much) she was completely used up. Finally in a pause she ran out and got to our door. The Doctor had to give her first aid. Mrs. A. took her to the cellar, where she recovered her calm.

About 5 we had a fourth alarm. This time there was no leisurly procession down the street to the shelter: young and old tore as if for their lives; nothing whatever happened. I sat with the A. on their balcony for an hour of blissful quiet - no one in sight except the German guards before the A.A.

Some people went on the roof and reported fires in four different spots besides the end of the street: Campo di Marte, Rifredi, Castello and a place to the N.E. of the works. Also the Palazzo Corsini was burned: where the old Pretender and his wife lived for some months.

We have no water in the house; our main ~~was~~ hit, but the rest of the city has it, so it is not serious. I seem to be the only wise virgin, having kept water in my tub - a little - and in four Vichy bottles for months in case of an emergency.

Well, we feel we can sleep tonight. The deed is done and we have nothing more to fear. Our roof was hit by splinters in two places and six feet of gutter torn away but the nearest real danger was about three or four hundred feet away, I should say - in the via Garibaldi. Our newsdealer at the corner had his little shelter burnt down, a

The summer is that it was the American Embassy. I hope it is not true.
The English, on the 2nd.

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wooden affair. The house which houses the "Carro dello Scoppio" was burnt and one next to it (in the via del Prato).

May 4th, 1944.

We have heard of the tragic death of Mrs. Nelson Gay, burned to death on the top floor (third) of the Hotel du Parc. (Via Solferino) She was very ill, probably dying, and could not leave her bed. She had sent her maid out on an errand. Very likely she did not realize what had happened to her. At the Pension near Frank's an old Russian who was blind was killed with her attendant.

A.E. went to the Crocini Pension (Corso Regina Elena) to inquire after a friend there. She found the door open and went in, not meeting a soul. She wandered over the house: every door was open and dire confusion reigned in the rooms: Plaster fallen, windows broken. She felt as if in a bad dream. She finally found someone who said her friend was safe. They're all going to move to the Poggio Imperiale.

The poor people have become so jittery that yesterday twice they rushed down the street saying that their planes were coming, but that the sirens were out of order. In the center of town Armida said the jam was terrible. She went to the shelter and stayed an hour! When the second fright occurred, Signor Leoni telephoned to the station and found out that there was no alarm; he stood at the door shouting to the crowd, but many were not to be convinced.

The rubbish before the Chapman houses down the street still reaches to the second story. About 150 of the diggers have just marched by going to lunch, I suppose. Their hair matches their dirt colored uniform.

May 5, 1944

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Half a dozen or more boarders have left our house for fear of bombardment. The people on either side are moving out. I feel it is locking the door after the horse is stolen, for never have we been so safe. The dreaded bombing of the repair shops is over; they are still burning and a line of wrecked cars reaches up into the Cascine. It will not be easy to get material for repairs. If the allies come back for the railroad, that is further from us. The "peepul" say they will come for the hotels, where the Germans are, but I guess we are not so stupid as to think the German S.S. soldiers and railroad men spend their time in their bedrooms. The final bug bear is that they will bomb the station (though it is a terminal not leading anywhere). "No, but they don't like the style!" It is a specimen of that hideous modernism spounsored by Mussolini.

May 7th, 1944

The diggers have not yet reached the shelter under the house near the Chapman. They have found another body today under the debris. Ascanio says 69 workmen failed to answer to the roll call of the repair shops. His relatives live near the tracks (Ponte alle Mosse). Their house was damaged to the extent of about 4000 or 5000 lire. They were immediately given damages of 1500 lire. On the opposite side of their street the houses are all in bad condition for 2 (?) kilometers, many of them destroyed. He thinks there was little loss of life there, as all were conscious of the danger and went to shelters.

These days hundreds or thousands of people flock to the center, eating out in the Piazza S. Trinita and under the arcades of the Uffizi. Armida never goes home but rushes about. Says she is dead tired. Baroness Cors was here, as debonnaire as ever. When the bombs struck the theater she was in her room cat-a-cornered from it, but her husband said she must go down to the cellar with him and the 3 dogs!

That afternoon someone came from the Du Parc to tell her of Mrs. Gay's death. She went over at once and wanted to go to her room, but was not allowed to on account of the danger. Mrs. Gay she had seen the evening (Sunday) before, very ill, planning to have another blood transfusion on Tuesday. She wanted to live 5 years more. That at 78! Just a few days before the Baronesse had seen her with 15000 lire. No trace of them was found nor of her jewelry. Carbonized like her body or stolen?

Young men with red brassards (UNFA) are deputed to help the sufferers from raids. Miss Pope who has come here from the Du Parc says she let them move her things and that many were stolen.

The only casualty I've heard of in this house is a cut on Sig. Leoni's bald head. He was standing outside our front door and like Florence A and me he saw the bombs rain down apparently on the A.A. He's always quick in his movements, and it didn't take him long to get inside. But all the glass above the arched entrance crashed at that very moment. He was fortunate to escape with a slight cut and a headache. The long salon of the A.A. (called the winter garden) had a roof and one wall of glass which is wrecked. We were lucky that upstairs no windows were broken. It's difficult to get glass.

The 4th and today we've had no alarms - such peace! But the other days we've had them, one day 5, but no planes have appeared.

May 8th, 1944.

Working night and day 3000 men have repaired the damage done to the Campo di Marte in 3 days, so that will be attacked again. "However," said she afflicted with a swelling of the instinct of self preservation from which many of us suffer, "that is far from us!"

It seems that beside the repair shops was a station of merchandise and there just arrived was a carload of marmalade, flour and other foods. Saturday night, instead of giving it over to the stores to be got with

coupons, they were selling it to the first comer, why, I don't know. Such a crowd collected that the carabinieri had to fire (in the air) to disperse it. We suppose that that was the jam promised us for May. The butter, too, perhaps. No one from here got near enough so that any of it stuck to him.

No prospect of water till they have dug under the shelter of the demolished house and then repaired the pipe. They've tapped a pipe in the Via Solferino and made a fountain where everyone goes to fetch a fiaschetto of water, servants and boarders - the younger ones. It is a blessing that Armida, though nearer the scene than we, has water and brings me some and does some washing for me.

May 16th, 1944

Yesterday it was just 2 weeks since the bombardment and they are still working ("by the day") in clearing away the debris of the house near the Chapman. They found 2 more dead yesterday. They were railway men who in flying from the works took refuge in the doorway of that house.

No knowing when all will be cleared up and they can begin to repair the water pipe. Everytime there is an alert, i.e. several times in a day, sometimes 6, the men throw down their shovels and flee. Of course, we feel that this part of town is now absolutely safe, but the poor people are like a cow before a railroad train. Ascanio is so tired carrying water for this house that he says he can't stand up straight. He seemed a little doubtful whether our fate was to be preferred to that of having the house destroyed! You can imagine supplying 50 people with water, and you can imagine, the sanitary condition. Fortunately it is not in France! Only a very small part of the city is without water.

Often at night we hear German fighter planes over us. You don't know how comforting it is, for they never go up if there is a suspicion of Anglo-Americans in the offing, since we are a defenseless city. It seems these planes, some of them at least, are carrying wounded from the south

up north. We know, because one fell near Sesto and in it were a dozen wounded - all killed.

After about a year in this house, the Duchessa di Lante della Revere left to go to the Palazzo Rucellai where the Countess (Edith Bronson) has given her a room. A sad come-down for a woman who brought her husband a million-dollar dot. The soprano and her mother (above me) got all packed to go yesterday but no trains were running. The Proprietor's fiancée left by a crowded bus.

Not long ago the Avitabile were at the station and saw many refugees from the south waiting for a train to take them further north. Among them was a young woman with a baby of 10 days in her arms and three others at her side. The baby was born after her peregrinations began. She'd got to wait till 1 a.m. in the station but was not downcast. Dear Mrs. A put a 50 lire bill in her hand. I wanted to give something to those who had been bombed out in our street; but naturally not through Fascist channels. Armida suggested her priest and I had such a nice note from him. Armida said he even looked with interest at some baby clothes I had made. No wonder he is beloved.

Recently the German High Command sent some people here. They asked Tosca, the maid, for something to eat. She said there was nothing in the house, that we'd had no water for days; they decided to look further! She's as common and pert as they make them; in fact they don't make many such in Italy, but she has her uses. When a soldier appeared with a "lady," she told him that she could not go upstairs with him. They paid no attention to her, so she trotted after and went with them into his room and stayed there till they got tired waiting for her to go and w away themselves!

May 19th, 1944

Nowadays we have no Germans here. This morning a soldier appeared who has stayed here quite a while, an Austrian who speaks good Italian.

He used to sit with the Italians of an evening, the only one who did. Passing through our library on his way to the dining room, he had asked the waiter: "What are all these English books?" Gino was scared and on the defensive, "Oh they're all old books." "Well, I want to read them!"

This morning he just came to say how-do-do and was quite pleased at the cordial reception he got. He said that he was only passing through; that he could not stay at this house anyhow, as the German soldiers were now in a very restricted area in Florence and not allowed to stay outside it. So things are looking up.

Planes flew over towards the east about noon; I counted 40. We had a 2 1/2 hour alert for them and this afternoon an alert of 1 3/4 hour, so our digging does not go very fast. They've got down far enough to see that the pipe is broken for quite a distance. They promise us water for the 24th, but I doubt if we get it.

All business is at a stand still, for the stores close during an alert and will not even allow the customers to remain inside. The tables in front of the cafés are crowded with people caught shopping who are waiting around for the stores to reopen.

We hear fewer hand bombs in the city. Some nights the Germans have walked the streets singing. One S.S. boy makes day hideous for us by playing the accordion on a balcony of the A.A. Somehow we've come to feel rather an affectionate regard for him.

I have been out every day for a week, even going to see the ruins at the end of the street. It was dusk and I could almost imagine myself in some of the less interesting parts of the Palatine. There was even the hooting of the owl (in the Cascine). "Come and see the cypress, hear the owl and plod your way over broken steps of thrones and empires."

The Chapman still stands but is just a shell, except for the ground floor. The Boulevard of the Via Salaria is an old canal filled in. Bombs have made a great hole in it where you look down into swirling water.

June 3rd, 1944

This house is only half full now, thank fortune. An amazing arrival is that of Signora Dumini with her daughter and grandson of 5. She is the mother of the supposed murderer of Matteotti. He comes occasionally to call on his relatives but I have failed to see him. His sister, they say has had two husbands, neither of them the father of the boy. He is a terror, but he has an engaging grin and if he had any bringing up at all, might be something. As it is he suggests no one so much as Mussolini. His mother is said to have shot at M, so perhaps was on loving terms with him. Sig.ra Dumini, strange to say, is a quiet little old Englishwoman. Her husband was an artist.

AH! There's a pulsing in the veins of this old house. Water has come! on the 34th day, after many an agonizing disappointment. Glory be!

June 5th, 1944

I think of you as following the Italian campaign with bated breath, but your interest cannot equal ours. I am scarcely able to realize that our troops have entered Rome. It seems sudden after all our expectations and disappointments. The great thing to me is that Rome is not damaged. I have been most pessimistic about that, especially since F.D.R. instructed the radio announcers, to say that every effort would be made to spare it, but of course, if it were destroyed it would be the other fellow's fault. The prospect looked dark. Now all is a blaze of light. I have been hearing of the great welcome our boys were given, I have even listened to the roars of the crowd in Piazza Venezia and to the bells of St. Peter's (Via London!).

We suffer no real privations in this house, though a robust person must find the table pretty thin; I should, if Armida did not boil beets or onions or artichokes for me everyday. We've had no potatoes for months, no butter except 1/8 of a lb in May, little oil (140 grams a month). We have meat from the Black market every day, very small portions.

usually tough. The bread ration is now sufficient for me (200 grams) but when they increased it in April they put in something that tastes like hay, reminiscent of Battle Creek products. Strange to think that the Italians are forgetting the taste of oranges - none for a year; no lemons. Apples we had during the winter and chestnuts; good prunes still; 33 for a dollar; tea 1900 lire a kilo, at Uncle Sam's rate of exchange £ 30 a lb; no coffee; little milk; powdered milk no longer to be found.

Probably the greatest lack is in medicines. Insulin not to be had; no pure alcohol or wood alcohol. My old pet Panbiline I've not had for three years - and have got along just as well without it! A recent blow is the lack of bicarbonate of soda. That does hit me.

We have enough soap, such as it is. My last cake of pure soap is almost finished. I've used so much shaving soap that I shall be growing a beard!

I've just paid 90 lire for a tooth brush (# 5.-) My hair brush is bald, but I'll not buy a new one till we can get those of English make. The rich and the Germans still eat well. The first thing I'll ask for is bread and milk. They say they're eating white bread in Rome.

June 13, 1944

I'm frothing at the mouth because all the B.B.C. gives us is the invasion, and the invasion and Normandy and the invasion. Here after six months of waiting the Italian campaign was just becoming thrilling. We had one day of glorification, then commenced the other and we're given two sentences a day on Italy. Of course it's a great thing to have the second front, but it's really our 6th landing, all described ad nauseam by those boys who flew or swam there; all just slugging matches! I am fed up. Dear old Steed did give Italy a bigger share of his week's talk, bless him! I knew he would, for he'd want to show off his long acquaintance with Rome. Nice occasionally to have a seasoned man

speak, none of your callow youths. I am longing to know all the details about Rome. I feel happy all the time that she was spared.

Florence is seething with a subterranean excitement. The Germans are leaving in big batches every night. Now there's a big bus waiting at the side of the A.A. I've seen boys going by apparently bringing home new suitcases. Some of the girls bought wooden boxes to take their loot in. They are common clumsy creatures whose beauty is not improved by their uniform - no style. They wear little envelope hats perched on top of their square heads.

One day last week a truck stood in front of the A.A. loaded with the furniture of one or two bedrooms: wardrobe, dresser, table and a big leather arm chair which bore a strange resemblance to some in the winter garden. Finally there were two little straight chairs in which the jaunty officers seated themselves in the truck and off they went towards the north. Our Proprietor was much depressed by this sight.

To counteract the flight northwards over 400 vehicles passed through on their way south. They say they were for the H.Goering division which had lost much of its equipment. Gino counted 211 tanks that went out the Porta Romana; one hundred trucks were for munitions and another hundred for other supplies.

Mira the maid wept on my shoulder yesterday and no wonder. Her mother lives in the country near Grosseto. Her brother of 20 may have been taken, or may be in hiding, so the mother is probably alone right in the track of the army. Maria was here Sunday consumed with anxiety for her son. She says there are some good Germans but no good Fascists.

There must be some Machiavelli's in Florence to start the rumors hear constantly. Evidently they long to see people running again for lives when the siren sounds, so they have circulated the report that station will be bombed! That the English have dropped leaflets announcing

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Over the radio messages are given such as "Beatrice weeps" which they interpret as a coming bombardment.

But a new affliction struck us two days ago - no gas. Owing to the lack of transport no coal can get to Florence; until some does arrive the inhabitants will have to eat raw food, many of them. You can't get coal for love or money. Of course this house is supplied with wood, but many in town have no place to burn wood even if they had it.

June 14th, 1944

You know how I hate those black specks high up against the sky, pursuing their relentless way? Well, this morning I had almost a vision of angels. The planes came over us from the back to the front of the house and as I looked out my window to the right I saw them appearing above the roof, the full sun flashing on them. I gasped at the beauty. They seemed of silver, looked to be deliverers in shining mail. In formations of 3, I counted 34.

June 17th, 1944

The next morning they came about the same time but the sun was not so strong and the planes were higher. They looked as if made of the same stuff as the wispy white clouds, or as the moon in her last eighth, towards which they flew: they seemed spirits.

We are exuberant that the army is half way to Florence. "When will they get here?" I give them till the Fourth. Meantime, the Proprietor is filling every possible receptacle with water: 400 fiaschi, an old wine keg he found in the cellar, an ornamental sort of sarcophagus in the garden.

Our spirits soar higher and higher, as the Germans flee, bus load after bus load. We have a poor Fascist with his family in the house and he has been trying for some days to get away but could not find the means. They are Sicilians who were bombed out and came to Florence, where they were again bombed out, very disagreeable people. Tonight they say they're going. Good riddance! When I think of the burden the Fascists have be-

to me these last years I, who am only a stranger, and have not suffered from them, I can understand the vindicative attitude of the Italians. With them it is an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. I fear there will be trouble.

It seems Gino the waiter was a goldsmith: his father and he had a shop employing 15 men. Because they would not become Fascists they were obliged to go out of business. Think of his losing all his skill and his craft while he waits on us! For some years he was a travelling salesman; has been all over Italy and to France.

June 18th, 1944

Last week, some German officers, 26 of them, went from Florence into the country to round up cattle to feed their men. They expected to bring back hundreds and ended up with 30! They took Ivan Ilie as interpreter. He related his adventures to the Avitabile. Besides the difficulty of taking the animals from the peasants, who used every subterfuge to get out of giving up their livestock, they were circumvented by the "partigiani" who seemed to be everywhere and who were well organized. Sometimes they treated with the enemy and came to an amicable understanding as to what they could take. Once they had a small battle with a band of them for half an hour or so, throwing hand grenades. It ended with only one casualty, that of a cow who had had her leg broken. She had to be killed. The Germans expected to take her, but the peasants pleaded hard for her and offered to pay for her with wine so the Germans finally took the drink instead of the meat and departed in peace. They ranged the countryside as far afield as Acquapendente driving the animals before them, getting their food and sleep as they could, usually walking or driving by night. When they had collected about 63 cows, by some accident 45 escaped, so they had to begin again. They walked the cows 40 km. one day, less afterwards, but their hoofs were worn down; they were exhausted and bore the marks of the beatings they had

received. They were never milked; the Germans did not know how to milk them; the peasants they asked to do so all pleaded ignorance.

Experienced German soldiers who had fought in Russia and elsewhere told Ivan that the fiercest fighting they had seen was at Montecassino. Both sides used new explosives more powerful than the previous ones. Every 6 (?) hours a truce was made to bury the dead and carry away the wounded. During the intervals the men exchanged cigarettes and chocolate with their enemies. The English and Americans were good fighters but the best in the mountain regions were the Moroccans, who fought man to man.

The Germans have lost much material. They are tired of fighting. A number of them still think the victory will be theirs. They have faith in the secret weapon - the pilotless plane. Before July 25, 1943, Mussolini said that it would ensure victory. During the first days after the landing in Normandy, the Germans thought it was only a trial attempt, not the second front. That may be the reason why troops were not sent sooner: they were holding them back for the real thing.

The H. Goering division now lives in three small houses, such have been its losses. These officers that Ivan was with hated that division.

In Russia poison gas has been used by both sides, not often, but occasionally in small engagements.

The most sensational item he heard was this: A division was left in Rome by the Germans with orders to defend the city. But they did what they had never done before, they simply decamped, the whole lot of them. Thus it was that Hitler spared Rome! and also the Allies!

To me it seems almost a proof of the efficacy of prayer. When the head of Christendom and his followers unite to pray for one thing, what may they not accomplish? Fear enters even into the soul of the intrepid enemy and he melts away.

They are constantly stopping young men on the street and putting

them into trucks - off for Germany?

Today came the rumour that we'd be without water after 3 p.m., the Germans were going to take the works to Germany! I've been filling basins, tumblers, medicine bottles, jam pots and vases, though I didn't believe the rumour. I can't think they'd tell us of this evil design (nor did they).

June 23rd, 1944

All went so swimmingly for 12 days that we saw ourselves welcoming the American boys by the 28th, only to make sure we have always said by the Fourth of July. Several Italians have said to me, stretching out their arm "This is how I shall receive them!" But now apparently our embraces are to be postponed; they've not budged for a week, though the B.B.C. in an off hand way in the midst of its absorption in Cherbourg every day gives Italy a sentence or two: "The troops are advancing steadily, though bad weather has made the roads difficult." They often toss the Italian campaign a bouquet saying it is an important part of the whole before hurrying on to Finland.

The Germans have brought some guns up from the front and stationed them around Florence (outside the city) for anti-air defence. Now when the planes come the cannon roars and we see white patches of smoke in the sky perilously near the planes. The other night 2 or more suddenly took a downward turn and I was terribly frightened for fear they'd been hit, and I rushed into the Avitabile's room, where I found Ivan Ilie who said no, but that they'd gone down to escape, as the guns could not hit them when they flew low. He's had lots of experience now struggling along the country roads, with planes always overhead. He sits on the mudguard of the car on the look-out for them.

I discovered that I had no stomach for air duels after all.

June 26th, 1944

We are now put to bed at 10 o'clock, so our masters can have more

time for deviltry. For the last few days and nights we hear frequent detonations, said to be the mines which are destroying all our factories, laboratories, etc. Of course that means pauperizing a good part of the population who will be thrown out of work. They've been given pay through August but not enough probably for these rising prices. It seems the climate

Piombino has just been taken by the Americans who are now only about 45 miles from us. People can scarcely wait to see them. Lots of Germans have left but still there seem to be innumerable hosts with us. Yesterday, Armida said the Cascine was full of trucks with Germans, apparently for miles on end.

Our house is again full. Our hearts sank to see a family arrive. The Proprietor had expected 5 and they turned out to be 10! No joke to find food. The personnel is far from adequate. These new arrivals have three children to join our Dumini who is equal to 5. I think he must be a son of Mussolini!

The latest arrivals, called Libori, came from Pistoia to be sooner under the Allies than if they remained at Pistoia. Their native city is, I believe, Naples.

Ivan Ilie broke his foot jumping off the mudguard when planes appeared overhead and had to be brought home, much to his mother's relief.

July a MONTH OF WAITING July 1st, 1944.

The excitement increases as our troops advance. Only 7 miles from Siena, now, 37 from us.

Our street, Via Solferino, and the Lungarno are all closed with wooden horses at the end towards the Park, where the Viale runs that encircles the city. They say it is to mark us off as an open city: fighting must not take place inside the barriers.

It is a commentary on our table that the T.B. has gained about 15 pounds in 6 months, even though living in a damp, sunless room on the

ground floor. She looks a different person. Of course, the sick have special rations of milk, butter, rice, meat etc.

Last night the German soldiers apparently had a banquet at the Anglo American hotel. Till after 3 a.m. we heard them singing. The dining-room windows on the via Montebello were open and light streamed out.

I've been trying to decide what we need most; perhaps coal, for the city has been 3 weeks without gas, so many have no means of cooking. Good soap and flour come a close second and third; perhaps medicines should come first. For some time the cleaners no longer take clothes for dry cleaning.

July 2nd, 1944

The plot thickens; about 2 a.m. the Piazza Santa Maria Novella was bombarded i.e. incendiary bombs were dropped on it from the air. Several hotels on the square ~~are~~ occupied by the Germans who all escaped. We have a suspicion that the job may have been a cute little trick of the Germans to make us disliked.

A more disturbing development is that Hitler out of his kind heart and love of beauty has declared Florence an open city. We felt safer before.

Yesterday and today we have frequent anti-air firing and are warned not to go out in the balconies or even stand before the window as the splinters are dangerous. As that is one of the few amusements left to us we'll probably continue our upward gazing.

If our troops advance as much next week as they did last week - next Sunday they'll be practically where they are today. We all feel baffled and sick at heart. Would that the B.B.C. (our only means of news) had one head that we might strike it off! I think there's not been a day that they have not said "the Allies are advancing rapidly on all the Italian front from the west coast to the Adriatic." It is like those raring steeds of the chariots of the Victor Emanuel monument that go so fast and remain in the same spot! The Germans were counting on our reaching Siena a week ago today! We still hear no end about Cherbourg and not much less about

Russia's victories, but two off-hand sentences suffice for the Italian campaign - proof that there aren't many British with the Americans, French, So. Africans, New Zealanders, Moroccans, Indians etc. of the Allied armies.

June was cool so we have only 2 months of heat or possibly 6 weeks to dread. Now the heat has come.

July 3rd, 1944

Many trucks have gone south from here carrying material to the German front. We are disturbed by immense ones with trailers passing through our once quiet street with almost the speed and noise of a railway train. Hitler may be short of gas but his minions don't know it; they stand for long half-hours (it seems to me) without shutting down.

July 7th, 1944

After the fall of Siena the Germans took 2000 of her citizens to send to Germany. They brought them to Florence where they were lodged for 3 or 4 nights and days in the Piazza S. Maria Novella in the convent Leopoldine at the corner of the Via Fossi (where in the loggia is the Luca della Robbia of St. Francis meeting St. Domenic near that spot).

Gino's wife comes from near Siena and they had a message that one of their relations who had been kind to them was in the convent. She tried to get in to see him but in vain. The next day Gino took fruit and bread for him and hopes it was delivered. The relative is an old man and frail. What they can get out of him is a mystery, but they even took patients out of hospitals. They were here three days before the authorities gave them a meal. Last night they were taken off towards Bologna. It seems the prisoners on a previous truck, with the help of the patriots, overpowered the four Germans in charge and got free, so we're hoping these can do likewise.

Naturally the Florentines are in great fear of being taken and many are in hiding.

Many Germans have already left. Our days and nights are hideous with the noise of their trucks.

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Some months ago (in March I think) they took over a great part of the Florence hospital at Careggi (about 2 miles out). It is a new building with modern installations. Now they have left it and Florence Avitabile went to look at her department. She found that the chandeliers or hanging lamps had been shot at and ruined; the stationary washstands had all been broken. Of course all the surgical and medical appliances and supplies had been taken away. The Germans have a list of the doctors and plan to take them to Germany.

July 7th, 1944

The disorder in town is terrible, not only the Germans take what they want from the stores but the Italians do, too, without paying. So most of the stores have closed.

Livestock looted from the peasants, who depended on it for their living, has been driven through the city, and outside the Porta Prato, They are selling the cattle.

Some friends of the Avitabiles, named Einstein, cousins of the great scientist, have a country place a few miles away (at Troghi). The Germans come whenever it pleases them to take a snack and to cart away a few hams or such like. They say they regret doing it a pistol point but that avoids all discussion! Their depredations have not yet amounted to much, but they hinted to the Einsteins that they had not yet finished with them. From a neighbor they stole ten pair of oxen - he can no longer work his farm. Did I tell you that six officers at the Consigli drank 22 bottles of champagne at their farewell banquet?

July 9th, 1944

The tension grows greater everyday. It is excruciating to sit here and know of the horrors going on about us, while the Allied army seems almost at a standstill. Most of the young men are in hiding, but it is hard for them to stay at home and their mothers lead a life of misery, for they will skip out occasionally. The same convent that

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housed the people from Siena now houses Florentines who are to be started for Germany. Yesterday many were rounded up a stone's throw from here on the Borgognissanti. Ascanio in spite of his 63 years was afraid and hurried home. Someone shouted to Florence A. "Run" and she ran for her life, for they take women, too. (Like everyone else she has lost her bicycle and has to foot it)

Last evening I saw a truck starting from the Consigli with people standing up in it, clinging to one another to keep their balance. I thought it was the poor souls that have been deported, but they say it was fascists and their families who want to escape north before the English come. Early last week sitting out on the Avitabile's balcony I saw two autos going north on the Via Garibaldi, each towing a gun, covered with bunches of trees. It was the first I had seen. Later Mrs. A. saw a tiger tank, going south, alas! She said it was a terrible thing.

Every day we hear that the German Officers at the Consigli are about to leave, but they're still here. One evening we heard more pistol shots than usual; they were shooting at the bats in the garden. Fancy! our great protection from the mosquitoes. But I suppose we ought to be glad that they were wasting ammunition. Last night they stayed on their terrace talking and laughing till the wee sma' hours. However, I must say that the Germans have been quiet and orderly. It is not till lately (after 10 months of occupation) that we have heard their voices on the street. Later (it seemed for hours) there was the sound of great trucks starting. I thought the officers were leaving, but in the morning (Sunday) their radio was giving forth a German hymn. The trucks were carrying our flour to Germany. Let us hope the patriots intercept them.

They sell some of the livestock they steal. Arnida was at her butcher's yesterday when they brought a great pig and sold it for 3000 lire (cheap). Now we have meat in plenty, since the farmers prefer to

slaughter and sell their stock rather than have it stolen.

Yesterday about 11 a.m. an A.A. plane, a fighter-bomber, came over us swooping down very low and dropped 2 or 3 incendiary bombs on the bridge near us, "Ponte della Vittoria." It was almost as racking an experience as our bombardments of the 1st and 2nd of May. Half a dozen were injured, a German killed, but the bridge was not harmed. Two houses up on our street were slightly damaged, I think the same ones that were damaged before. There was no alarm, as the Germans have taken the sirens away! We're expecting another attack. It is a bridge they use to take supplies to the front, in fact, just where Mrs. A. saw the tank.

Today the paper tells of the arrest of 4 men, doctors, lawyers, etc., who will be held as hostages to be shot if there are any more attacks on Germans or any acts of sabotage. Oh, why don't they come! Maria agrees with me, that though we lack so many necessities, and need food, she'll not ask for a thing, if she can only be free and not have the terrible nightmare hanging over her, of her boy's being taken and shot.

Last night we had planes over us rather low. Then about 4 a.m. I heard for the first time, a low muffled roar way off on the horizon of sound - the ARTILLERY, I can't say that I like it.

There is no telephone service except for drug stores and doctors. We still have water and electricity. Today, hot water in the pipes for the 1st time since May 1st, for the plumbing had to be repaired after our 7 weeks without water. The house is full to bursting; everybody now rushes to the city, the reverse of last year. People leave only to return with their families. Where the Proprietor puts them I don't know; often 3 in a room. The question of food is difficult, but we have meat and fruit. Today has been about our lowest depth so far - most of my 2 meals went to the cat, to which they were better suited - a small piece of very tough beef, with a very small mess of indifferent vege-

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tables cooked in horrid grease, tripe and poor soup. But I did have some nice boiled rice and two small stewed pears (delicious). Bread and jam helped me out. I could have cooked myself an egg; we have plenty of them. The price has fallen from 13 to 11 lire apiece.

We are expecting daily that Florence will be declared in a state of emergency, which happens 3 days before the allies arrive. During that time men are not allowed in the streets; the women can go out for an hour or two each day to get food. They say the state of emergency is arranged so that the Germans can work their will unhindered.

July 13th, 1945

We keep hearing stories of horrors, well authenticated, for they came from the hospital where the victims are being cared for. One was of a village betrayed by its mayor to the Germans, who came and burnt most of the houses, killed many men and took some girls between 14 and 16 years of age to the barracks for a week, killing some of them. This was told by one of the women of the village at the hospital, where Florence heard it.

Another was of two soldiers going to a family in the country, saying that they wanted to desert; could they supply them with civilian clothes? Of course the clothes were forthcoming, the Germans departed professing themselves grateful. A little later they returned with several others well armed, killed the man who had given them the clothes raped his wife and 16 year old daughter, then killed the wife. They shot the daughter and left her for dead, but she was not dead and in the hospital rallied sufficiently to tell her story. She cannot live which is a merciful thing.

Do you wonder we count the minutes till the allies come?

Still they are "advancing all along the line" and never changing their position! I wonder what the truth is? Are they marking time till Russia invades Germany and Hitler will have to recall his troops from Italy?

Yesterday many more men were taken to be sent to Germany.

The Archbishop of Florence, Cardinal Dalla Costa, has asked the

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authorities to take him in place of one of the hostages they arrested 3 or 4 days ago, a man who has been prominent in public affairs and philanthropic works. Of course the answer to the Cardinal was that they did not want him.

A school for American girls formerly kept by an American, Miss Childs was searched yesterday. The school no longer exists, but they were after some of the luxurious furnishings. I understand they got nothing. It started me once more hiding my belongings! Gino worked for some years in that school and had helped hide some of the things and wall them in! They were not found.

In an outpost of the Line of the Goths.

July 21st, 1944

The Allied army only 17 miles away!

Oh, St. George, do make haste to rescue this harassed maiden Florence, before she loses more of her life blood! Every day her youths are taken and started towards Germany; the cattle and means of livelihood of the farmers round about are looted and the women are raped.

Will the English never come?

On his way home the other night Gino found that the Germans had adopted new tactics: they had doffed their uniform and in civilian clothes approached unsuspecting boys and caralled them at pistol point. Three were shot and killed in the process.

A night or two later he met with a group of Germans returning from the front. They inquired the way to Fisa and, as a matter of course, were sent in the wrong direction. When they found it out, they began to fire promiscuously on passers by! Gino says the streets are too lively at night; from now on he'll sleep here!

By the way, I saw half a dozen Germans apparently back from the fighting line, begrimed and weary. They wore shirts made of camouflaged material, splashes of green and brown, I think, and carried tin hats. They went towards the A.A. where the guard motioned them towards the north.

Yesterday the Germans left that hotel; the Grand, too, is emptied of its High Command. What a load is lifted from our spirits! I hope the hotels and pensions are being scrubbed out for the English; a servant at the A.A. said it would take months to get the place clean. The half-dozen officers are still at the Consigli; I should think they'd wish themselves away when they hear the artillery, getting nearer and nearer. It is like distant thunder and makes you feel head-achy.

We have few planes now, but some every day.

Laghorn is without water or electricity, so we keep water in all receptacles and the Proprietor has given each of us a small yellowish candle which we've got to make last through the crisis. The state of emergency may be declared any day now. They've already blown up different buildings in the Cassine. Two days ago we had constant explosions like blasting from the southern part of the city. What it was, I don't know. However, the bridges are as yet intact.

We've had the cheering rumor that an agreement has been reached whereby there'll be no fighting within 6 kilometres of Florence. A great piece of news was that the four lawyers and doctors taken as hostages have been released, but the sad part is that those who had disposed of several fascists have been tracked down and shot. For that reason they did not keep the hostages.

A lady, a connection of someone in the house, has turned up, having walked 18 kilometres from her house which was in the fighting line. (This was Sig.na Scaglia. Her and her brother's villa at the end of our street was burned May 1st. She went then to stay at S. Casciano, but as the troops drew nearer she thought it better to get out of the line of march, so she and her maid Elvira (60) started one morning at 3 to walk to Florence and got here in the evening.)

Yesterday I saw a man come to the house on a bicycle with numerous bundles. He was stalwart, much tanned and weather-worn. Later downstairs he was embracing his little grandchildren with rapture. It seems the Germans were making a fortress of his village in the hills and he had come away with what he could carry, never expecting to see any of his other belongings again. That or worse is what you may expect if you stay in your house in the country, while if you leave it earlier you're pretty certain that everything will be looted.

One night after 11, 2 Germans came in at our service door and made their way to the lobby. The usual number of men were lounging about and the speed with which they melted away was said to be amazing. The Germans proved to be harmless, only half-seas-over, but we couldn't know that, so the boarders repaired to their prearranged hiding place, a cubby hole at the top of the house where the reservoir is lodged. The next day one of them told of their trying to squeeze in all together, laughing at their ridiculous situation, till the tears rolled down his face.

When there was a ring at the door on the following night, no one moved to open it. It was morning rather, after one. Finally hearing Italian voices outside, Ascanio went to the door followed by the Proprietor and several others. They found a young officer with his wife and baby, who'd just arrived on a camion and were in dire need of a bed. They had to go into a store room, we're so full up.

July 22nd, 1944.

While I was writing this in bed at ^{mid}night, others were up on our roof gazing at a distant fire southwest of the city. That is what they went to see but even more spectacular was the sight of the cannon flashes, like lightning. I wish I could have seen them but our roof is a sloping one; to get there, let alone keep my footing there is beyond me.

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July 24th, 1944

Maria was here this morning with a tragic story. On the evening of the 17th Germans appeared in her square to round up men to work in Germany. They shot promiscuously at people and at windows. Maria dared not stay at home, so she and a neighbor came out and managed to sneak away, but not before she'd seen the dead and wounded (7 dead) in the square. A girl went up to one body and stooping over it recognized her young brother. You can imagine her state and Maria's.

Maria pulled herself together and went to warn Francesco, who was bathing in the Arno, not to come home. The poor boy was hours there; he didn't know what to do. His mother would go towards her house to find out what was happening, then back to him, to tell him there was still danger. I think they finally went for the night to the people who have the shop where she works.

Maria said the Germans had taken away all the horses and cabs. That was a personal blow to me! (Later: this was an exaggeration). Never again to be able to sally forth in a delightful little victoria! For I feel that everything that is ever directed towards the German maw will never get back to Florence again.

We used to have an efficient service of street cleaning; several times a day, smartly uniformed men came on bicycles equipped with receptacles for refuse which closed automatically, with a pail, brushes etc, all a marvellous contrivance. I see no more of them. But the trouble is more than skin deep: the sewage is all out of order and filth is accumulating. Poor Florence! Poor Italy!

The horror that has touched me most is that people passing the barracks in the old Ognissanti cloisters hear the shrieks of people being tortured to give information to the Fascisti.

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July 26th, 1944

The one thing that was plentiful was eggs - at a price. The Germans took a lot of them and now the hens have very sensibly decided not to lay. We had only 2 yesterday from our 17 hens.

"5 lines converging on Florence the anchor of the Gothic Line."

The agony continues. The via Palazzuolo was closed while four carabinieri who had "deserted" were hunted down. It is said they were caught and will be shot.

Meanwhile the B.B.C. announces for 3 days in succession: "The Allies in Italy are advancing rapidly across the whole front; they have taken Castel Fiorentino and San Giorgio Valdarno." This for 3 days. They advance like the horses on St. Mark's.

Night before last at 11, the whole place seemed bathed in light. I could not understand it, for the moon had set. Finally at the end of the street there came into view 2 great balls of light (Flares?) which slowly descended. I was afraid we were to be bombarded but nothing happened except the passing of airplanes, for hours it seemed to me.

July 29th, 1944

The cannon firing becomes louder. It is not continuous, though we have it for hours at a time, the more annoying because at irregular intervals - no rhythm to it. I gather that it is at San Casciano 6 miles away to the southwest, where "the New Zealanders are meeting stubborn resistance from the 4th German Parachutists, backed up by a handful of tanks" (quoted from B.B.C. this morning). As my window faces southwest I get the full benefit of the roar. I think it was the night before last that a woman living on the Borgognissanti counted more than 70 tanks going south. That did discourage us.

I don't often cry, but I came near it when I heard about Impruneta, a village near us. A.A. reconnaissance planes saw, or thought they saw,

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German cannon around it, so came by night and fairly blasted the village from the face of the earth: 400 or 500 killed. A procession of the survivors with bundles and handcarts came to Florence the next morning = yesterday. And at the time of the bombardment, not a German cannon was there!

Gino lives near the Porta Romana where they entered Florence. He and his neighbors housed 17 that night and his wife made coffee for them all the next morning. (i.e. the stuff that is now called coffee). He also hustled around and bought 3 chili of jam and some bread in the black market. There is a rumor that it was the Fascists who told the A.A. that there were German cannon at Impruneta.

Sunday July 30th, 1944.

For months we have been saying, "all will be worse before it's better." Now we're at the threshold of the worst. It is like death or matrimony: we don't know what we're in for, but it will be something different.

We've been hearing rumors that the city would be in charge of the Cardinal della Costa and Prince Corsini in the inter-regnum; that it would be handed over in knightly fashion by the Germans to the English without a shot being fired. As for the water supply, we heard that the Germans were taking our water works home with them, but that the Cardinal had persuaded them not to do so and that the parts that had already been dismantled were being put back in place. However, this morning we awoke to a lack of WATER AND ELECTRICITY.

To go back to yesterday; like a bolt from the blue manifestos appeared plastered on the walls all over town saying that certain streets would have to be evacuated, and listing many of the principal ones. We thought first Via Montebello was among them and great was our trepidation. However, we can again be thankful that we live on a modest narrow thoroughfare and not on the Arno. The bills explained that this evacuation was for the protection of the citizens in case the big bad wolf = the A.A. =

should take it into his head to blow up the six bridges across the Arno. Nothing like Hitler's thoughtful care of us!

So all last evening and this morning (they were given only till noon today) we've seen poor souls going by with handcarts and baby carriages piled with trunks and household belongings. On top of the mattresses on some sit tired old women being pushed along, for the trams do not run and there's not an auto nor a horse in evidence. (We hope that there are some in town well hidden). Bicycles are not allowed on the streets. I saw one handcart with a large birdcage on top with canaries on it. Something fell off. I looked out anxiously, but it was only a typewriter, the birds were safe. At just five minutes to twelve a wheel came off a baby carriage loaded with goods. The poor girl pushing it was trying to tie it on.

We are blessed in one thing; the weather is the hottest yet. Many will have to sleep under the stars tonight, in the Campo di Marte, Piazza S. Croce etc.

Signorina Avitabile has to care for the wounded, so her mother decided to go to the hospital to be with her, though she's not sure of a room. They went off this morning with a handcart, which they said they'd push themselves if they could not get a man. (Sig. Leoni let the man here do it) We bade each other goodbye for 2 days.

Our servants are mostly gone home to be with their families: the waiter Gino, Gina, Tosca and the bell boy Franco, leaving Mira, Ascanio, Giulio and the Leoni to run the house.

To my surprise Maria and Francesco have just appeared. As their recent hiding place is in a street which people are obliged to leave, they've now returned to their own house and have beds to sleep in after two or three weeks of lying on the floor.

The officers at the Consigli sat talking last evening on their terrace with their lady friends (German). Later there was much shouting in the streets.

in the streets till 1 or 2, I should say. Perhaps they were leaving. They say all have left now. But I whisper it only. In Perugia when the population thought itself free and began to rejoice they were hewed down by a company they had overlooked.

It is now four o'clock and still an occasional cart goes by. It is a strange city with no sound of autos, or horses, only voices and foot steps. Sometimes I think I hear a horse coming, but it is only a young person in wooden sandals.

Yesterday afternoon, Gen. Alexander broadcast to us that he would soon be here - to be calm and to save our city. This morning a plane dropped leaflets to the same effect. Sig.ra A.B. saw some come down in our garden. Francesco gave me one. To my surprise the faithful Mira (chamber maid) brought me a lunch of excellent boiled beef, which I like since they can't put their awful grease in it, boiled potatoes and a delicious broth with lots of rice. The Proprietor says he has meat for 5 days (at 240 lire a chilo). I'd prefer more vegetables, but they're hard to get too. However I have a dozen tomatoes ripening on my window sill and as many pears. They say we'll have no bread tomorrow. We've all saved scraps, drying them out in the oven or on the electric toaster, so they won't mould.

July 31st, 1944

It did not rain but a cool breeze sprang up. Probably the crowds sleeping in the open found it refreshing.

The noisiest night yet: the battle began in the evening and raged till 3 or after, more and more fiercely; at times the house shook; there were little flashes in the sky like heat lightning. We do not know where the allies are since we have no electric current for the radio.

The shady set in the house have had several midnight suppers, when they sit and drink till 3 a.m. Sig. Leoni says they make every victory an excuse for celebrating; he will no more of it till the British come.

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then wine will flow freely. Strange that people can make such a solemn occasion an excuse for getting drunk! Fasting and prayer are in order - and hard work! Florence is a Job on the dung hill. The city of the Lily stinks.

August 1st, 1944

Last night was fairly calm. Perhaps the New Zealanders had gained the battle for the road to Florence.

They say a German was shot near the Porta Prato last evening and that 300 Florentines will be shot in reprisal.

The meaning of tyranny has come home to us; one group of men turning half a city into the streets, depriving them of light, of the means of cooking and of water to wash away their filth. Overnight we have found ourselves living with the inconveniences and squalor of the Medici.

The breakfast brought to me this morning (and I foresee it will be the same for many a morning) consisted of boiling water. I supplied tea and jam and brickbats of bread. Not even a newspaper, because there is no electricity to work the press. I miss my laugh at Fascist news.

Later: We've the good news that there was bread yesterday and will be today. Those little khaki-colored loaves, heavy and coarse as they are, seem delicious to me.

I had thought that the streets would be deserted, but as a state of emergency has not yet been declared, the people are thronging everywhere, especially search^{ing} for water. To my amazement a young Moses attacked the side of our house and a small stream flows forth over which they quarrel. Not all men of the people; I looked down on the bald head and green trousers of the Marchese Antinori.

Ah, here comes the rag man - all is well! I've not heard his call for two days. The ice man is faithful.

All day long the Anglo Saxon planes (fighters?) keep coming over us, singly or in small numbers. I think it is just curiosity to see what

we're at! Why can't they wait till they get here?

Last night I was so often awakened by detonations that finally I lit my precious candle to see the hour, thinking it would be about half past four. It was only half past two! One explosion was terrific; It seemed as if a neighboring house had gone up or gone down. The strange thing is that we know of not one single object that has been demolished these last days: no one goes out to espy the land!

Then we heard a droning plane which irritated the anti-air gun about two miles away. They are like dog and cat. At last about four there was some quiet, quiet which enabled us to hear the distant rumbling of the artillery, almost soothing after the other.

This morning there was a busy scene beneath my window; people with kettles and pans and even a foot tub getting water, while two young men in the house went in search of wood at some ruined building and returned with their hand cart well laden with pieces of doors, a picture frame and even a ladder. All is grist that comes to the Proprietor's mill and he eagerly dragged them in. However, he left some little branches or twigs in the gutter; at once there was a woman gathering them. On the terrace of the Consigli appeared a dignified German officer puffing his cigarette as he watched our ant-like activities.

August 3rd, 1944.

It must have been fairly quiet last night for I slept well; however the evening was anything but quiet. Either hand bombs or demolitions kept us on the jump; some sounding as near as our own doorstep, or at most next door.

I fear the Germans have put another anti-air gun near the city, apparently to the north. Heretofore when a plane came like a little dog sniffing with friendly curiosity, the gun spit at him like a cat, but last night and today the cat is a lion and his roar makes your headache.

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The Florist across the street, who is not well-balanced, just retired into his shop to have a brain storm. That happens occasionally when there are no provocative cannon. You'd think he was belaboring 2 or 3 people but he's all alone.

Two miracles happened this morning; a street cleaner swept up our street. He had not one of those superfine bicycles, alas! (they cannot be used because of lack of rubber tires) but a handcart with 4 or 5 great cans into which he shovelled the refuse that had collected in the gutter in four days, innocent enough here in this part of the city.

The other glad surprise was bread! Not our usual ration but perhaps an etto, (about $\frac{1}{4}$ of a pound) *100 grams*

August 4th, 1944

If you put up a little prayer for us last night it would not have come amiss. In the afternoon the Germans declared a state of emergency and got busy. It was much worse than the air-raids, first, because it was at night and second because it was the work of the Germans. We don't know what they did, for no one can go out. We are obliged to stay in with the blinds shut. However, they say they blew up one of the bridges with mines - the Vittoria, about 500 yards from us, and the Carraia next to it. At any rate the explosions grew worse and worse till at 5 a.m. I thought part of this house had gone. The suction of the air brought down the glass roof of the elevator shaft with an awful crash. Fortunately the elevator was at the top and the glass fell on it, much of it, instead of on the people in the lobby. I was afraid to open the door into my bathroom, for fear it wasn't there!

I finally got into my clothes and down stairs after it was all over. My descent was ludicrous and slow. Sig. Leoni was above, busily sweeping up the glass and bits were falling everywhere. He was quite oblivious of me. I was in terror of the glass; yet could not hurry, for I was carrying

two bags, and a sack of things besides three big books and a candle! I would move a bag down a few steps, lean back for the others, and so on for an eternity. At last I subsided into a comfortable chair in the lobby and sat alone in the dark. It wasn't quite dark for a small candle was burning on the desk. Presently a young man entered and put out the candle. "Oh Signore!" I protested. He had not seen me, but he explained that he thought it better not to have a light, as the Germans were in the street before the house.

When Sig. Leoni saw me he was astonished: "What, are you coming down," (It was the first time) Why, the Bava are still in their room on the top floor!"

A little later I saw a female figure slowly coming down the stairs and thought I recognized Mrs. Bava. She came into the lobby, took a chair touching mine then bent forward to peer into my face. Evidently the prospect did not please her. She settled back with a grunt. "I thought perhaps after this onslaught it was up to me to do something, so I made the stereotyped remark that I hoped the worst was over. Another grunt on her part and then she rose and, walking towards the hall began to call loudly for Miss Pope, and I was alone once more. Presently the young man who had snuffed out the candle came up and asked who I was and if he could not take me to the others who were in the salon. He kindly took me by the hand and urged me to go, but I desisted. Then he sat down by me and began to talk. He'd been fighting for three years, was in the Greek campaign and was taken prisoner and carted off to Germany. He escaped and got down here to hide. He and a friend have No.41, the room above me. His sister, Sig.ra Libori, her husband and two young daughters are in the house (girls with two long braids).

Sig.ra Guardagnini appeared about now with her two girls. She said

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she'd vowed a chain tutta d'oro for the Virgin if she got through unscathed. She gave the impression that she was treating the Madonna quite handsomely, giving more than the value required. A young man strayed in from the salon. He was discussing the different sorts of guns and I strained my ears to hear something to the point, but Sig.ra G. snuggled up to him saying, "you know when the explosion occurred my bed shook just like this" and she made a waving motion with her hands, and we heard no more of guns.

Day had come, the blessed day, and a fair, exuberant creature, a Croatian, went to the window and threw open the blinds. I was horrified, "Oh Signorina, you mustn't do that, the Germans are outside." "Oh no," she assured me in mellifluous accents, "the Germans have all GONE!" Soon the young man of the candle put her in her place and the blinds in theirs. I decided to take myself and my belongings upstairs, some bit of a task, but the young men, so kind to all the old girls, carried up my bags and books and so to bed again.

The Battleground, Aug. 6, 1944

We're all thanking God for quiet; our ears have been tortured and our bodies racked with the noise of the artillery. Whatever you may have thought of the noise and power of modern cannon you can safely multiply by ten.

The horrid fact is that the battle has come to Florence. The first that I was aware of it was about half six yesterday evening when a stunning noise almost knocked me off my balance. They said it was a shot badly aimed which hit a house on the Prato. After that we had a fairly quiet evening, but after midnight the cannonading grew fiercer. I saw that it was something different again, neither bombs, nor mines, nor the distant battle, it was the battle at our gates. They say the Americans and English have reached Mt. Oliveto just across the Arno from us and have set up a cannon there. My window could not have been better placed to receive the

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full force of the roar. It was deafening but rather flat; another followed, sharper, crackling and more terrible. That was the German reply. The house and my bed rocked so that I had a sickish feeling. I went into my bathroom to escape a little of the noise; then I heard a weird swirl of sound, from the little court; it was the first time I heard that German shell. That and the sound of a falling house (apparently) decided me to go down stairs. I stopped in at Sig.ra A.B.'s and asked her if she wanted to go down and she did. I believe no one stayed upstairs.

This time I groped my way down the passage to the parlor, where many of the boarders were sitting. Why, it would be hard to tell, because it is in the house next door, our annex, which is not so well built as ours and only two stories high. Also it has a gorgeous chandelier and several great old gold-framed mirrors, all of which if reduced to splinters, might play havoc with our eyes and faces. But there they solemnly sat in the semi-darkness for the most part in silence. I found a chair near the door. It was next to a sofa on which sat Sig.ra Dumini with her grandson stretched out asleep. After I had put my bag and books in the chair I went to see if A.B. was on the way. I met Sig.ra Damiani in the hall and she kindly asked me to come into her room on the ground floor, but as she already had 7 visitors, and a bed made up on the floor for her nephew, I declined. I found A.B. on the stairs and led her to a comfortable seat not far from Mrs. Bava and Miss Pope. When I returned to my chair the Dumini's daughter was there and claimed it as hers. It never occurred to me to dispute with her; We seemed to be standing on the brink of eternity where seats did not count, so I gracefully yielded and got another place. I saw afterwards that that was just what she did not understand: Anyone who did not stand up and fight was a poor creature, only made to be bullied.

After I had been a few minutes in my second chair a door back of me

opened to let in Signor Bava and some others. I of course moved to let them pass and he apologized. But from the end of the room came the fog-horn of the Dumini daughter: "You mustn't sit there, you're in the way of the people who come up from the cellar!" I obediently moved my chair to one side of the door. "No", she yelled, "get out in the middle of the room. But not caring for the chill draught of air which circulated around the center, I staid put. Thus ended my first and (I hope) last encounter with the sister of the notorious Dumini.

As the cannonading died down somewhat we all wended our way back to bed.

We are a wiser and sadder lot - after all the talk of no fighting near Florence, and of a chivalrous surrender, to find ourselves in the midst of a battle! We know nothing, not only of the outside world, but of the happenings in other parts of Florence. It is said the bridges on the Arno have been blown up, except the Ponte Vecchio.

We do not even know the fate of the Pension Constantine on the next street. The poor little soul, Miss Wittick, who came here when evacuated from her apartment on the Via Garibaldi, sent her maid out this morning to reconneiter. She found all doors of the building wide open as well as all the inside doors of her flat; bureau drawers pulled out and some things missing. Almost next door to us this morning a German went up by ladder to a flat that the owner had left, to help himself.

I asked Sig. Leoni when the Germans would go and he said not till they're driven out.

Even as late as yesterday morning (it seems a long time ago) I thought possibly they had gone. All was quiet and people were stealing out of their houses. A group of half a dozen stood by the side door of the Consigli gossiping. How I wanted to be with them! Sig. Leoni joined them, but just then came a German on a wheel. He called out "Pericoloso!"

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(dangerous) which I thought most decent of him. In an instant all disappeared and pistol shots (?) were heard to scare them.

Some have to get water. We are indeed fortunate that there is an artisian well by Armida's only a block away. However, you have to stand in line an hour usually for your turn.

After our trying night of Aug. 3-4, Sig. Leoni gave us each a little sugar, perhaps 1/4 lb. We'd not had any since June, but I still had some on hand even after making gifts of it.

The night of Aug. 4-5 I went to bed with my neighbors the Swallows at 9, for I had no candle. It was a pretty quiet night and I slept or dozed about 11 hours and retriicked my beams. In the morning I waited in vain for my boiling water and finally boiled some myself, though my stock of meta (solid alcohol) is getting low. About 11 Mira came with apologies: She'd entirely forgotten to take up any breakfasts! I said, "why what's the matter, Mira? Didn't you sleep?" "I didn't even go to my room but spent the night in the cellar." I asked Ascanio if he had slept: "Perhaps an hour and a half." I asked the new man whom we suppose to be half-witted if he had slept. "Yes, well." So now I know where I belong.

All has been quiet today on the Florence Front except for desul^latory machine-gunning. Now at half past six things are warming up. If they'd only do the job in the day time!

August 8th, 1944

Yesterday was the second day after our night of battle but I felt worse than I did on the first; my head ached and my legs did not seem to belong to me. I thought I was on the road to shell-shock or a stroke, but today my head is almost normal and my legs are on the job. This beautiful cloudless morning, I had no sooner breathed a prayer of thankfulness for quiet and Light (I see you can't appreciate either till you've undressed and washed and got into bed in the dark only to lie and be racked by cannonading). However, as I say, I had no sooner given thanks than there

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came an awful explosion. They say an A.A. plane had dropped a bomb some place in Florence, probably on the Campo di Marte. That was a blow because we've come to look on the planes as friendly: there's almost always one droning over us.

Yesterday when I was napping who should come but la Palladini, of the heart of gold! It seems she had worried much about me up here alone during all our trials: at times had come to be with me, had even reached my door, then some great crash had scared her down stairs again! Now she would come very day to see me! (Thank goodness! She did not carry out her kind intentions)

About 3 p.m. the battle commenced today and has been going on for nearly two hours. Those funny little swirling missiles that come down singing, sound quite innocent by day, while at night they seemed ghastly. Apparently there are only about 800 Germans in Florence but for 10 days they've been holding a reign of terror over 400,000 inhabitants. People are asking where are the rebels, the boys from the macchia, that they don't prevent all this looting. It would seem easy enough. The Germans who came here in Sept. '43 looked like prize fighters; those who are leaving, we hope, in August '44, are boy scouts. They are thin, mostly short and oh, so young! Some are haggard and unhappy. One will occasionally go singing or whistling along the street, but it must be to keep his courage up. I'll admit they seem rather happy when loaded down with loot.

What was my surprise this noon to have a call from Armida. She went to spend these days with her niece and her husband, north near the Mugnone. I urged her to go, as she never could have stood them alone. She's the clinging kind. It has been a great relief not to have her around my neck. It seems today our masters have allowed the women to stay out till 7, so she came to see her flat and me.

A neighbor of Armida's niece has a radio set that is working (I

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suppose he has a little battery.) The nephew goes every day to listen to the news, but I couldn't get much, filtered through him, who is anything but pleasant after staying in for weeks with his wife and her aunt, and through Armida, who knows nothing whatever of the war as a whole. However, I gathered that our bulldog, Churchill, had shown his teeth (bless him!) and told the Germans that if they bombed Florence he would bomb Dresden. He's credited with a special tenderness for Florence as "his mama died here." Of course it isn't so, but the people believe it.

Yesterday, Linda, the Prop's niece stood two hours in line for bread for the household, and then it gave out before she got any. There was some machine-gunning and it was said that a girl in the line was hit and carried away in a handcart to die. So the women who fetch bread and water are heroines. I see them go by, many of them looking so trig, always courageous. The Italians are a wonderful people, so patient and amiable; perhaps it is the result of their long history of invasions and oppression.

I was pleased the other night downstairs during the mining of the bridges to hear someone say (Sig. Leoni I think) "It is Mussolini who has let us in for this and now he wants us to be killed, so he can live longer."

Things are strained in this house of 50 people who never go out and are much together. Sometime ago the Palladini told the Damiani (the T.B.) that she need never salute her again, to which the Signorina replied that she was quite resigned: it had never given her any pleasure to salute her. Yesterday morning in the corridor on this floor there was a terrific battle of words between Sig.ra Schilling and the Dumini daughter, who talked like a fish wife: "E' un ignorante, ha capito?" "Ignorante" is a term of opprobrium; next worst is "farabutto" (which the Palladini called the Proprietor) the climax is "delinquente." I haven't heard anyone get so far as to hurl that at his opponent yet, but there are scandals enough in this once respectable house.

Aug. 9th, 1944. 65

For once there's no wind. Two stalwart girls have swept the rubbish in the gutters into two piles and applied a match. People opposite cried "Bravo!" Unfortunately there's broken glass mixed with the paper; also a dozen tin cans which I fear came from our house. Why couldn't they have been kept in the cellar for a time?

They say the Germans are at Fiesole! I just heard a cannon shot which sounded as if from there. Ours are a loud definite "Bam" rather muffled; the Germans' cannonade is more piercing, almost a crackle to it.

So now we're between two fires; the balls supposed to go over our heads. As Ascanio says we thought we were in one of the safest parts of the city and instead, we had two air raids because of the Locomotive Repair shops; had the mining of the Ponte della Vittoria and now are in direct line of the artillery firing! They say the English are at Porta Romana. If so, perhaps Maria and her son are liberated! Gino and Miss B! Also my trunk and bag!

The half wit, Giulio (I've decided he's not half-witted) says you get used to the noise, he sleeps well. The combattants fought for two hours by day and at 10 p.m. started in again! and kept it up pretty well all night. I have prepared a "line to withdraw to according to plan;" three chairs in a row in my bath room and when the roar is too excruciating, I sleep there. It is a quiet little room on a court. I hate to go down stairs, especially on account of the people. They say the passage way to the cellar is so crowded that it is uncomfortable, if not unsafe. Also the conversation is mostly complaints and recriminations. The poor Prop, comes in for much criticism, he who has really done wonders in feeding us and getting water and staving off the Germans from taking the house.

Ascanio and Giulio have just come with two great demijohns of water on a cart. They had to pound on our door to get someone to open it. It is like a scene on the stage, these frequent knockings, for the minute a person goes out, the door is locked behind him.

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Gino stood from 7 to 11 in line for our bread, about 1/4 of a lb

*ess. A shell from the German cannon at Fiesole fell in the mid-
of the street, a few yards from the queue; 8 or 10 were wounded. x*
August 10th, 1944

I heard church bells from the other side of the Arno. Machine-
gunning terrible in a.m.

August 11th, 1944

*For 7 days and 8 nights we've endured the state of emergency, grow-
ing more and more hopeless. The shelling last night was perhaps the worst
of all, beginning about one and shaking the earth. I wonder if these old
houses can stand much more of it. We heard rumors that houses in towns
south of us had fallen. It must have lessened about half past three for I
slept. At 6.30 I was awakened by much chatter in the streets: people were
creeping out in spite of renewed cannonading. There came some terrible
explosions. Finally after 8 I saw some of our boarders strolling up from
down town and my wonder grew. The charmer next door carried a lovely rose
and looked a smiling madonna. At last I caught Sig. Leoni sweeping the stairs
and learned that the Germans had blown up barracks, the Campo da Basso, etc.
and were said to have LEFT!!!!*

My loathing of them had reached a climax yesterday when all morning
with rifles, pistols or machine guns they had chased the people indoors. I
saw no reason why their away should ever end.

But hurray! today towards noon there appeared half a dozen wideawake
young men going up towards the A.A. They were not in uniform, but wore
brassards of red white and green and carried rifles. They were Partisans,
rebels, boys from the macchia. I think they were investigating the haunts
of the Germans, scenting out any who might be left. Later there was some
rifle firing probably to discourage would-be robbers among the Italians,
for yesterday, some had broken into houses to steal food. Sig. Papini who
was obliged to leave his flat on Via Magenta and come here, surprised a man
helping himself to his fiascos of wine. He explained that he only came
because the others did, that he'd pay for what he had taken!

*Lashed Gino if he staid after that. Why, beginning, I must all through the war 14-18; I am used to artillery.
It is different from air
raid. You can
defend yourself.*

The partigiani called on the people to put out flags and soon ours was out, at half mast, as was fitting. But we're ordered still to keep our blinds shut because of the shelling, so we live in twilight.

August 13th, 1944

The English are in Florence! It was quite different from what I had expected - bands and cheering crowds. If there were such they were far from Via Montebello. After lunch I said to Giulio, "Well, the English did not come." "Oh, yes, I've seen many on the Borgognissanti. They're already at the Consigli and are coming to the Anglo American." Later I heard an airplane and some noise of people and that was all. No more strident voices and guttural commands!

Last evening about 6 there was a great chattering in the street. A crowd of perhaps 50 were before the corner grocery, which had opened up and was selling soap and wine. It did me good to hear them all having a good time again. After about 2 hours of it, one of those young hopefuls, a Partisan, suddenly fired his rifle at them or above them. My blood boils to tell of it, those poor women and children who have nothing but alarms day and night to be startled so!

They gave us a lively evening with their firing. I had disobeyed orders and left my window open. At one time I was a little anxious they came so near, but they passed by and we've heard no more. Bombs were dropped in the night - supposedly by the Germans; not near us!

Last night the shelling was about as bad as ever and longer, but it was not directed right at my window as it was the first nights. Still it was recking. When it did not keep me awake the couple next me did. They've taken to having company till 1 a.m. Mira has been in bed two days, which leaves Gina and Ascanio and Giulio to do everything. Ascanio waits on me. Poor tired old man, his cheeks more sunken every day, not sleeping o'nights and working all day. His bedroom is near the shelter and the chattering

people as well as the shelling keep him awake.

August 14th, 1944

A night for me without alarms. I slept from ten to six and awoke to the sound of a church bell, I think that of the Cathedral. I am a new woman. However it seems that there were disturbances and many of the nit-wits piled downstairs again, but the half-wits, Giulio and I were happy.

Unfortunately there are some sad doings - the wiping out of private vendetta. Sig. Leoni saw a man chased and killed on the Borgognissanti and his body thrown on a garbage cart and carried away. They say there are machine-guns on the roofs of houses in the Piazza d'Azeglio.

I think I've seen a British officer on the terrace of the Consigli, where the Germans were till 3 days ago. Just now I heard a noise in the street, but was not sure what it was; it seemed not loud enough to be a motor. But it was! One that ran on greased wheels, quite different from the wrecks the Germans had taken from the Italians. It is six years since Hitler and Mussolini with their suites rolled along the Lungarno in twenty or more automobiles, all absolutely new and shining. I presume few have been manufactured since?

I've only just learned that Saturday about 3 the day after the Partisans took charge, a band of 14 came to this house to search it for Germans, Fascisti and weapons. They placed a guard at each door with a rifle and went all over the ground floor. They were brought here by a nephew of Bracci, the cook who was here when I came. Years before he had had a bar on Via del Prato. One day the Fascists appeared, wrecked it and turned him out because he was not a Fascist. Naturally he and his kin were rabid against the Fascists. He said if they found anything or any Fascist here they'd burn down the house.

I don't wonder the poor proprietor is jumpy with all these alarms. The boarders, too, some of the "distinct people" have been complaining

of the food. A while ago when a respectable family left, I said to him: "what a pity it was those nice people instead of the rag, tag and bobtail." He fired up: "You don't know how difficult it is, it is always hard, but now doubly so." I assured him that I understood. I think we were all taken in by the Scaglia, a couple who came here from their villa at the end of the street, a fine garden a house with 43 rooms, looking out on the Cascine. It was hit by a splinter May 1st. The fire could have been put out with a pail of water, it was said, but no one was there. The fire engines were at the Opera House. Everything was lost. Signor Scaglia is a dignified, quiet man in the forties. They are people of means, his father was Consul to Chili and his sister was born there, (the same who walked here from San Casciano.) The "Signora" is small and piquant and has "it." She wears her dark hair straight and parted in the middle, the ends curled in towards her head. It is refreshing after all the waving ~~esses~~ ^{manes} you see. They have the Star Chamber next me. It was sometime before we learned that they were "engaged!"

This morning Armida appeared full of the horrors she'd suffered at her niece's - worse than here. A viaduct or two over the Mugnone on the northern outskirts of Florence was blown up and a German cannon seems to fire right at them; it has damaged the house and brought down 3 fruit trees in their garden. They spent two days in the cellar. She finally ran away this morning, scared to death of the machine-gunning on the street, but bound to get home. Her niece and husband refused to leave their house, or at least couldn't agree what to do; spoke of going to the Cathedral for shelter. But if you leave your belongings you may lose everything.

Yesterday afternoon we had the amusement of watching 6 or 8 Moraccans lounging on the sidewalk. They've been given quarters on the ground floor of the house opposite. Black and skinny, they suggest monkeys. Their khaki shorts leave their pathetic little legs exposed - all of a width all

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the way up. Each one has a bit of red about him on his shoulder or his stocking. Giulio had seen many on the street and that is why he asked me if the English were black! Too bad they have to come first and be so much in evidence, for one of the continual slanders of the enemy has reference to the "mercenary troops" and to their morals. But they are a great help as workers. It is they who are repairing the Bridge of Santa Trinita. All three of the great supports were left intact, only the arches gone. These have been replaced by a wooden platform, over which pre manufactured iron plates have been fitted. They say the bridge can be used on the morning of the 15th. Only three days to put it in shape. Was it worth the trouble of demolishing it? and not only it, but all the picturesque old houses overhanging the Arno, which the concussion of the air caused to collapse.

No bread yesterday, nor so far today, but they say we're to have it today, and that tomorrow the English will give us 2 etti of white bread. I'll believe it when I eat it.

Later. What a surprise! White bread today = almost half a pound. Thank you Uncle John Bull!

August 15th, 1944

I've never told you of my great act of sabotage. When the Fascist came to rob me of Lujunice he told me to send it in an hour's time to such and such an address. That gave me time to fiddle with it. I had on hand two old worn-out valves which I had neglected to turn in. Now they came in handy to substitute for the new ones. So far, so good: but why not take out something else? A gadget in the middle looked rather important, so out with it! Of course I kept the little tail that goes to the radiator.

That was on Monday. On Saturday they telephoned Sig. Leoni that Miss Otis's set lacked 2 parts. He stoutly denied it and we heard no more, though you can imagine that I was rather jittery for a few days. At any rate, poor little Lujunice could not do much work for her captors.

To my surprise in came Maria and Francesco this noon. They had walked dry-shod across the dam of the Arno. Yesterday I'd been told of a man who waded across! The water came only up to his middle. Two women are said to have tried it and been drowned by the current.

That side of the Arno was liberated on the 4th, the day after the state of emergency was declared and 9 days before this side. They escaped a lot of annoyance, but suffered like us from the mining and shelling. Many houses are in ruins but they are unscathed. Francesco leads a charmed life. They brought the sad news of the killing of Beppo Bessi. He was the 60-year-old farmer in Scandicci who had sheltered and fed 5 boys in the macchia last winter; Francesco was one. For selling his oil to buy flour for them he'd been put in prison for 3 months, but had borne it cheerfully. It was a happy day for the family when he was free again. But alas! it was not many months before he was shot by Fascists in the woods. The woods are the haunt of wild animals and only his skeleton was found.

A.B. came in to tell of going to church (Assumption day) for the 1st time in over 2 weeks. Then she had walked down the Borgognissanti. She said she saw not a window that was not broken and the blinds all sagged. As she stood near the bridge, 3 persons, 2 men and a woman, were hurt by mines they unwarily trod upon and were carried off to be cared for.

She talked to groups of British soldiers. I wanted to ask if she told them what she'd been repeating for the last three years: "I know my English; I know they're decadent." The old turncoat was a staunch Fascist till a year ago. This morning she opened her jacket and displayed on her heart an American Flag.

I thought back to the time Italy entered the war. We were only four or five boarders here then. When the police came to look at the records I was the only suspicious character and might have had trouble if Sig.Leoni had not protected me. A.B. and poor speechless Miss Smith were ardent

pro-fascists, so was dotty Miss Stanhope who said she was "engaged to a high official," while Mr. Sollenberger, an American, was pro-German. He has gone to America, Miss Smith to a better world, while Miss Stanhope has advanced to be M's fiancée!

August 16th, 1944

One of the worst nights, shelling pretty constant from the British cannon on Mount Oliveto just across the Arno, that "Bam" as decisive and final as a sledge hammer of a thousand tons. They say the Germans were shelling or trying to shell, the bridge the A.A. had just repaired. One shell made a hole in the house next Franco's. He is our bell boy who has returned from his sojourn with his parents across the Arno. Gino and Tosca have yet to show up. But wonder of wonders! Ascanio had time to clean and wash my floor between his 3 1/2 hour wait for bread and the one for water which is usually as long. I told him he need not work for me when he had so much to do but he said that that was just a diversion. The bread is still 2 etti and good. The Proprietor has presented us each with two green pears - a glad sight (I trust they won't appear on the bill) and we had a beet for lunch along with two meat rissoles, potatoes and rice.

Our first newspaper since the British occupation was issued this morning; "Corriere Alleato" (Allied mail) a small single sheet with news of a landing in southern France. I suppose at Marseille. I do hope not near Cannes.

It said here in Florence 1000 refugees were being housed and commune feeding places set up. They are clearing up the debris leading to the Ponte Vecchio so that the bridge can be used to bring in food. Five men have been killed by mines as they worked.

Ascanio said he felt sure that in America they must know about the battle for Florence and that as soon as it was over my cousins would write me. I told him I'd had my cable ready to send for months.

Here is the last installment. Love, Frances 73

Armida's niece and husband after two more days of misery in their house finally fled this morning to Armida's leaving all their precious belongings, perhaps for ever. At 4 a.m. they had started to put some things in the cellar for safety. When they had finished they accidentally broke the lock, so couldn't even lock them up! The husband has been making money and they've got nice things.

Last night a family came here from San Gervasio on the eastern outskirts of Florence, fleeing from their house, not bringing a thing, the danger was so near them. The old man and 5 females slept in No.16, Anne's room in November 1939. They put mattresses on the floor.

August 16th, 1944

The Moroccans have disappeared and instead we have a company of Scots on our street. About 2 o'clock they came tramping along single file as if just from battle, dirty, their faces and forearms fiery red from the blazing sun. Small and wiry they seemed cruelly overladen with knapsacks and what not on their backs, rifles in their hands. Some of the English lounging on the sidewalk, hailed them or gave them a friendly punch; one called out: "Don't worry, Boys!" It is startling to hear English spoken. Also it is strange to see soldiers squatting or sitting about at their ease. The Germans walked to and fro but never relaxed in public. I tried to make a sketch of one of the Scots. How I wish I could send it to his mother!

August 17th, 1944

The young Scottish officer (Sig. Leoni did not know he was an officer, for his get-up you could scarcely call it a uniform, was more like a golf or skiing costume, and as simple as the Tommy's), asked if the men could rest in our house. We are full-up, but the Proprietor said it would give him pleasure to have them for the afternoon and he would give them tea. The officer thanked him, but sent his own tea.

So they stayed in our salon and on the verandah, 34 of them and had their tea. The Sergeant's instructions were to behave well and act as if in their own homes, and they did. Towards 8 o'clock they came out in front of the house equipped with their knapsacks, tin hats and rifles. All sorts of grim-cracks they had: some carried what seemed parts of a gun to be put together, the Benn?; others had folded stretchers, one to a couple of men.

The sergeant gave no ringing commands, he seemed simply to be dropping hints to them, in a low voice. I heard one such suggestion "keep in towards the wall." Then when all was ready they quietly walked along single file on the side walk towards the sunset. There was no military formation, they did not even seem to keep in step, but out they started for the battle at the Mugnone. The lack of any ceremony made it all the more moving. Giulio looked at them, too, from my window and said, "they're going out, perhaps to die, and they do it for us." Later on when he brought me a can of hot water he returned to the subject. I presume he is not fit for service and is all the more impressed by the deeds of those who are. "Perhaps they will die." I said something about praying for them. "I too, will say a little prayer but not a very long one, for I am so tired it is hard to kneel long."

All the night they were on my mind and it was a long night = about the worst. I was awakened at midnight by the frightful shelling and feared the house would come down. I got into my clothes; things seemed no worse; going down tires me much. I finally undressed and got into bed again. Somehow we lived through till 2 a.m. Then a new noise started = rifles? and sounds of shouts and yells in the neighborhood of the Excelsior. We don't yet know what it was all about, but the shells hit the roof of a villa, near the Porta Prato and also the roof of the Dumini house, in the next block, but did not do much harm. The Proprietor had refused to keep the Dumini here, because of their relative, so they had returned to their flat a few days ago. They had been bombed out the first of May,

then later went back to it, but they heard the police were searching for them and came here. Last night the two women and the boy spent miserably on the stairs. Shells hit a roof near Santa Croce, another on Via dei Neri and another on Via dei Benci. I am pleased that the houses did not fall. As I am not on the top floor, I'll not be so frightened. I must have slept some but at 4.30 the inferno was still with us. After 5 it was quieter.

But Ascanio heard that the Germans won the little battle last night. That seems the last straw. What sort of a person is Alexander anyhow? Almost 3 weeks ago he sent us those leaflets telling of his speedy approach; Florence is not yet his and no high officer has even come here. I lay my wager no one will come till we have water! They'll not do without their daily tub.

I've spent another of those futile days putting more things together for Ascanio to keep in his room in the cellar. These letters along with two valises.

The dark is coming and another battle is probably before us. It is more like a great storm at sea than anything else I know. I have a slight feeling of nausea during it.

August 18th, 1944

They say that yesterday morning the Germans had come back into the city as far as Piazza Torino! But all that is changed! They have been driven out of the Mugnone region and all the northern border. The people say that for the first time Mussolini's Republican black shirts have been seen fighting with the patriots. (Didn't I say Florence was suffering from his deviltry?) Well, this is a great day, people feel themselves free. The Signorina on the terrace opposite gestured to me opening her arms wide and then imitating a great embrace. There is much traffic, so many British autos and trucks piling in. Many tanks were said to be

waiting outside the southern gate.

The night was terrible; the shelling was as powerful as the night before, but it did not seem directed right at us. I slept a good deal. Nothing like getting used to a thing. Almost everyone went downstairs.

It seems there was some loss of life at the insane asylum from shells falling on the roof and penetrating through several stories.

The night before when there was that fiendish blast at midnight, a shell fell in the court of Armida's house. She was in such a state that in searching for matches, she fell under the table and didn't know where she was. Her niece routed her out and they all repaired to the cellar for the rest of the night. Today the niece and her husband have gone to see how their flat near the Mugnone has fared.

In the small hours of last night I wrote:

The God of Michel Angelo's Last Judgment standing on the Monte Oliveto hurling:

"BAM! BAM! That for the FÜhrer!

That for his Jackanapes! You get it?"

Wotan (from Fiesole (?)) thunders back:

the sound of jagged lightning and the curlicue shell that sings.

Silence for one minute.

Again "BAM!"

Then a horrible one that fells houses (though not near us); A swerve to the South East. Perhaps Miss Brogan's? Isolina?

I hope the Avitabile are out of it!

Silence.

A religion that could make a god of war! Fie, Julian."

August 19th, 1944.

Hope deferred maketh the heart sick.

We were indeed heart sick again yesterday afternoon, for in the swaying

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tide of battle our hopes of the morning were dashed; the Germans advanced again. The family of 6 in Anne's room had paid their bill and gone away to their home in San Gervasio, but there they found conditions impossible and returned here. Armida's niece went to her flat but could not stay. However they retrieved his bicycle and her two fur coats and came away to a pension in the centre. Their one night at Armida's was enough for them!

Last night was one of the worst. How can we go on? Our ears and bodies are racked and tortured. I feel a rag. The shelling began about 10 and went on with some pauses till 5 or after. "BAM" ceased for a time, terrible was the enemy shelling rather to southeast of us. I was worried for fear "BAM" was put out of action but he started again. Of course we have some during the day too, but that you can stand.

On the 4th after the blowing up of the bridges, I asked Sig. Leoni, "when are the Germans going?" "They say in 2 days." "Oh, two more of those awful nights!" And we've had 15 of them, most of them fearful. I had a talk with him yesterday. It was his own idea to put the flag at half mast, but he soon saw it was not feasible and changed it.

One day on the roof he discovered a hole above room No. 34 (that I used to have). On investigation he found that a stone had gone through, but had not penetrated the ceiling below. It had struck against the wall and remained there. He got it out and weighed it: 12 chili (26.40 lbs). Apparently it is a piece of the bridge of the Vittoria, which flew up and across the more than 500 yards and landed on our roof which must be 40 or 50 ft. high.

Yesterday he went across the Arno to see Gino who is ill. He stayed only about 15 minutes with him but the trip took over 3 hours. He crossed on the dam; to do so you have to go down a long ladder which he found difficult; (one rung missing) but an old woman of 80 made the trip just before him. He tried to return by the Ponte Vecchio but found the Via

Via Guicciardini impossible, the houses have fallen on it. Armida planned to go across the Arno to buy vegetables. There is a little boat that ferries across by the Cascina, but she heard that two women in the boat had been shot by snipers from the shore, so she gave up her trip.

Sig. Leoni says the Germans took not only the water works and electrical plant of the city but the telephone and telegraph apparatus, and emptied the Post Office of everything. I suggested that if there were no hell, we'd have to invent one for them. "What do you mean?" he retorted, "don't you think this is hell right here?" Homeless and hungry people, despoiled of their belongings and of their means of livelihood, livestock killed, orchards razed, not to mention murder, rape and torture.

The one drop wanting to the cup of bitterness was the invasions of the Riviera - that other scene so dear to me to be ravaged. The first page of today's newspaper is taken up almost entirely with news of the South of France, Cannes in the headlines. Florence and her shelling is not spoken of.

The High Command is at the Savoy Hotel. The Consigli has been closed - a great loss to them. I suspect their sympathies were always with the Germans. At any rate Mrs. Payson is being avenged. She is an American with an Italian son-in-law. Two or three years ago, long before the German occupation, she was staying at the Consigli and had to eat in her room because some German boarders did not like to hear English spoken in the dining room! Here at the Villino Montebello English has been spoken all during the war. To be sure, Sig. Leoni got in bad with the Questura, because he was "too kind to the English." He was ordered to take the photo of the Dixon family out of his office. Can pettiness go further?

Our bread is whiter and better every day with a thick golden crust. I could live on it and jam. But it won't last long.

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August 20th, 1944

Things look better today. The Germans have gone back a little. The English have placed a cannon in Via Solferino and another in Via Rucellai to fire at Monte Morello (?) I tremble for the night.

Last night I slept from 11 - 3:30 - so happy. Then there came a new experience. I think it was an immense shell from the Germans going directly over our house with the speed of blankety-blank miles a minute. It seemed almost to graze our roof. We heard bits falling on the street. Then we had another and finally 3 more. I should say they landed near the river, perhaps on the other side, with devastating effect. I feared they might have silenced our BAW, but after a little he roared again.

Sig.ra Avitabile is back after three weeks instead of 3 days at the hospital. She went there to be with her daughter but on the third day her daughter was sent on to a first aid station near Rifredi where she still is. The mother's room at the hospital was far from cleanly. It was used as a dispensary by the nurses who came and went continually day and night. She was in the inside on the court of an old building, so did not suffer as we did from the shelling but could not sleep, such a lot of children and poor sick people were laid on the ground in the court at night; little paralyzed babies from the Meyer hospital, who'd been brought down from Fiesole when the Germans fortified it.

She heard the tragic histories of some of the patients who had seen their daughters raped, their families killed. One man she saw had been tortured; all his finger nails and toe nails had been wrenched off and the palms of his hands scraped. She says Fascist women have burnt out the eyes of the patriots with cigarettes.

August 21st, 1944

I see nothing before us but the destruction of Florence - and probably of ourselves. Last night the enemy rained broadside after broadside at the centre of the town, entirely different from the other nights

when we seemed to be the target, or the other side of the Arno. I saw her as a woman on her knees being lashed with a whip. I think the worst was about half past 4 and it went on till six. The shelling had begun pretty fiercely even before I got into bed at ten, so we had about 8 hours of it. All day long there had been some; in fact at 11 a.m. Armida had seen a child killed by a shell in the court of her building. She was 4 years old the only child of her parents. The mother was taken away crazed.

This morning about 10 the British bombers appeared after a long absence and bombed Pratolino to the north where the Germans are holding out. They hide in the woods by day and advance into the city by night. It is said the British felt that they must bomb them out or they would raze Florence. San Lorenzo, the old church where the Medici are buried, is said to have been hit by the German shells, also the Uffizi, the Strozzi and the Cathedral.

Sig.ra A. says citizens have been dying of starvation north of the Mugnone where the Germans cut them off. Some were already in a state of coma when they managed to get word to the English. We do not know whether they were saved or not. One sad thing is that while we are eating good white bread, the hospital has poor brown bread. Before the English came, the head of the hospital had bought up some flour and now he had to use it.

She says that many partigiani have died at the Mugnone fighting the Fascists; they were inexperienced, not organized, from 16-22 years old.

The Fascist sharp shooters from the roofs are a great danger. Sig.ra A. knew of a doctor's wife who was shot and killed by them on the street. It was probably because of them that the English or Scottish soldiers here were told to keep to the wall.

She and Sig.ra Damiani told of terrible outrages on women which seemed well authenticated, things too fiendish to soil your mind with. They reminded me of the "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse."

Gino returned today radiant because he had embraced the first English

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soldier to enter Porta Romana. His neighborhood has suffered much from the cannonading, which tore a hole in his apartment house. He and his family had been living in the Movie house which is in the basement, feeding on peppers; he had had 9 days of intestinal fever, but all that was forgotten; The English had come! (He and his father were put out of business by the Fascist some 20 years ago). He and Ascanio and Gina and I are (as far as I know) the only ones in this house who began the war Pro-British, but no doubt some of the Italians here whom I am not acquainted with were equally anti-fascist, also the two Croatians, one who is a Yugoslav Colonel and came here to hide, and the other a woman, a charmer. Of course, all are now Pro-Ally!

I told you of our flapper of 85 and her pleasant encounters with the boys on Assumption day. Well, the next noon she appeared in my room even more exuberant, her American flag a little more in evidence; she'd met English and Scots, one had drunk her health in Vermouth, "such charming boys!"

Now drinking never appeals to me, and especially just now when we're at a funeral it was a little too much, so I asked with a smile, "did you tell them they were decadent?" I had to repeat it 3 times and finally spell it for her. She became a tragedy green. Duse was right if she urged her to go on the stage, "I say that!! I might have said it of the French or the Italians, but never of the English! I know them. You have invented it. You have a poor memory," and so on, etc. I simply sat and smiled; finally asking her to tell of her morning, but she refused to do so and flounced out. The surprising fact is that she was honest, she believed what she said. She has gone half around the compass and does not know she's budged. It's really a phenomenal case of self-deception. Of course she does not remember my showing her the door for the way she talked about America, nor her threatening to denounce me for listening to the B.B.C.

How I wish Mr. Dixon were here! He was so furious with her, after some insult to the English that he told his daughters they need never speak to her again!

August 22nd, 1944

O joy! the cock. The nightmare must stop soon. Finally the merle begins his song, there is a twittering of the swallows then 6 o'clock and the church bells. It is over. It is strange to look out on the quiet morning, everything in nature smiling, the birds in my great tree, butterflies on the terrace. It must have been a nightmare, that hell. It began with 8 or 10 projectiles hurtling above us in quick succession, crashing with fearful impact the other side of the Arno. Certainly to an ignorant observer the German Artillery sounds the more powerful and more blood-curdling, but then we are at the receiving end of it, while we hear only the discharge of the British shells.

We had a calm interval in the middle of the night, my sleep only prevented by the chattering of my neighbors who saw fit to have their friends in till after one. Later the centre of the town seemed to be hit. We are at the mercy of the same blind fury as London, fortunate in that it is shells used on us and not the flying bombs.

The Germans are still encroaching on the northern limits. One day is just like another, only we become weaker as time goes on. Does no one care at all about Florence? except, of course, the Florentines, who can do little except send their boys to die at the Mugnone. Someone has heard a radio which runs by means of a private motor. Montgomery has said the war won't last much longer, so I suppose that is the reason nothing is done for Florence. It is a race between the war and Florence, but I fear Florence will be finished first.

August 23rd, 1944

Last night we were sure we were kilt. After rather a quiet evening we were awakened just before midnight by 5 or 6 blasts from a German

cannon in the hills, more powerful than those they had used heretofore. (It has been suggested that perhaps they are the other secret weapon - the rockets) They appeared to be aimed right at us. It seemed as if the house that adjoins us on the southeast were torn away and crashed down, that perhaps part of ours went with it, as did most of the neighboring buildings.

Everybody went downstairs except Sig.ra Avitabile. It was the third time I've gone down, not to the cellar, but to the lobby which is vaulted. Presently Sig. Leoni and half a dozen young people came up from the cellar and joined me. They thought the Villa Favard had gone. Someone said that the Germans were wrecking their fury on Florence because it had always been so beloved by the English. I can imagine the saturnine satisfaction of M.

There were several young men in the group, Italians, and three young women. One was the fair Croatian who had opened the blinds on the previous night when I went down. This time her face was covered with grease but strange to say it did not disfigure, rather I think it called attention to the prettiness of her features in the light of her candle. (We each carried a candle but lighted it only when necessary, sitting mostly in the dark) The Croatian's "line" seemed to be to keep everyone moving. She suggested to one of the men that the chairs were uncomfortable, why not bring some from the salon? So off they went to lug between them through the little library and down the long narrow corridor, a big arm chair; again they were off to bring a second. Finally all were comfortably stretched out and seemed at ease, but another girl complained that she didn't like her chair, so up popped the Croatian to change with her, apparently the soul of amiability. They moved and fussed all about me but were scrupulously polite to me. In fact the only suspicion of incivility I noticed in my three adventurous nights came from those with Anglo Saxon blood.

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Finally I left them all to go back to bed, wondering how our small staff of servants would feel on finding the great chairs to be put back in place. But perhaps the Croatian and her friends saw to that.

What was my surprise in the morning to look out on a landscape unchanged! Mira went up on the roof to behold the ruins and saw not one! However, two houses on the Via Palestra about 100 feet from us were damaged; The Rotonda, a round garage in the Prato was much injured and the trees laid low; a house on the Prato just behind us was hit and a little house on the Via Rucellai and a convent near by had holes ripped in their walls. Also the Favard was hit, but not badly damaged.

The paper gives a list of all the harm previously done. One of the saddest losses is that of the medieval houses each side of the Ponte Vecchio, which came down into the river. It was the blowing up of the Ponte S. Trinita I think that did it; (the bridge was made passable in three days) the houses can never be replaced. The top of the Baptistery, also of the Campanile, has been hit and the side of the Cathedral. Miss Brogan's house was not demolished though damaged.

The newspaper that came this morning was a new venture, The Corriere di Firenze, and it warmed my very heart to read a paper expressive of the feelings of the Florentines, giving late news and exact information. After years of Fascist lies, the people will have to be educated to read the newspapers again and to take them seriously.

August 24th, 1944

I slept from 11 to 4.30 and feel that life is worth living once more. Of course in my sleep I heard the rockets or whatever they are whistling over us, but they landed rather far away. Of what mean stuff I am made! I never knew my vileness before. In theory I would give my life for some of the treasures of Florence: The Palazzo Vecchio, the Baptistery, San Marco, but when I hear the cannon I ^rgovel in my bed and cry out; "any

place but here, oh God!"

Yesterday evening about 5 a young man from the house was in the Piazza San Lorenzo, always crowded with poor people, when a shell struck there. He saw 3 wounded carried away.

It seems almost everyone went to the cellar last night even the J = S. officer who never used to think of going down. I suppose the lack of all aim and purpose strikes fear into us, just as in the case of the flying bombs.

Life is rendered pleasanter by the care taken of us by our government. Since Naples was liberated, we've expected nothing in the way of food (Fascists have not failed to rub it in) but it seems every member of an Allied nation is entitled to a prize package with sugar, coarse salt, milk, soap, 10 cans of Phillips meat and vegetable stew). You pay 600 lire for all this; but the hitch is how to get it? Apparently you walk from pillar to post, stand in line, in fact, spend hours before you become the happy possessor of such valuables. As most of us Americans are old women it is rather difficult; only our flapper of 85 is equal to it. She takes an hour of people's time, buttonholing them to tell of her adventures: of how she browbeat the policeman who wouldn't let her cross the bridge, quarreled with a Red Cross nurse, bullied an English officer into helping her; It is lung power that brings success in life!

Ivan Illie (17 with a bicycle) got the food for Sig.ra Avitabile and she has given me a little salt.

Water is again flowing from the side of our house with the consequent little crowd with pails and carafes.

August 25th, 1944

The night was not so bad as some others but there was much cannonading, not striking near us, more houses hit on other side of the Arno and several deaths. John Bull's cannon started up after several days of silence and has been lively all day today. It is about the hottest day (about 90°)

we have had, though all the week has been hot to make up for a cool July. Usually Florence is cool after the middle of August.

Last evening about 6 I was with Sig.ra A. on her balcony when there came a shell that drove us indoors. It seems it was aimed at men repairing the Ponte della Vittoria. We do not know whether it caused many casualties or not, but the daughter of Sig.ra Dumini, walking near had her leg bruised with flying debris.

We are rejoicing over the liberation of Paris and the right-about-face of Rumania. If only the end will come in time to save Florence! An English officer is reported to have said that if the English attacked the German cannon in the hills the Germans would at once raze Florence, that the English are doing everything to save the city. Also he said that the Allies would advance no further in Italy (?).

The Sig.ra avitabile, calm and intrepid, is doing great work on the north of the city just on the border where the Germans still are. She and a nurse were for a time in a Casa Popolare alone, conducting a first aid post. One evening three Germans appeared and entered. They asked "Aren't you afraid?" "No, why should we be afraid?" pointing to their Red Cross brassards. The Germans seemed preoccupied and uneasy. They made a pre-functory examination for arms, etc., but the girls guessed that their object in coming was to escape some English who were on their trail! They finally left, came back again, then left for good. After three weeks of this work and a little food, the Dottoressa was moved recently further south to look after 100 Partigiani between 16 and 23, most of them in a sad state after months of concealment and little nourishment. She tries to give them the English point of view. When they complain that the English do not advance she repeats what an officer said to her: "It takes 20 years to make a man and only 25 days to make a tank." They saw the point and said, "And to think the Italians were sent off to fight in Greece

and Russia with no such care, just as cannon fodder."

Once she was called upon to interpret for the English who were to meet some Germans with capitulation in view. But after waiting 20 minutes no Germans appeared! Again she was called in for a consultation with the German Doctor, or rather the medical student who was acting as doctor.

She was told that between Siena and Florence the English lost only 40 dead. I wonder how many Italian men were sent to Germany during that time, how many shot and how many women outraged.

Perhaps about one this morning there was the most excruciating noise I've heard yet - something going by the house almost like a railroad train that seemed unending. They say it was British tanks going north.

Afternoons we hear the bag pipes. I'm told the boys in kilts dance too. In the evenings the soldiers sing on Via Solferino. One night I heard "way down upon the Swanee River."

Aug. 26, 1944

John Bull kept it up all night. There were only 2 or 3 cannonadings by the enemy; they sounded a little too near us, probably aimed at the bridge della Vittoria. I rejoiced that they were only a small proportion of the night's work, though the British cannon kept us well awake; we seemed to be playing the part of Walter Tell and having the apple shot off of our heads. They go so high above us that we don't worry.

Another thing that pleased me was that 4 at least of the German shells missed fire, just fizzled out. I'd never noticed that before. Gino says because something was not put in that should have been, perhaps due to sabotage. Hurrah!

Yesterday after a sleepless night worrying about her daughter, Sig.ra Avitabile took to the road at 6 a.m. and went to her. It's a long way and she's by no means husky, but she got there, even climbing down into the Mugnone and up again where the viaduct should have been. She found her daughter almost at the end of her tether, not so much from hard

work and responsibility as from the news she'd had of the Einsteins, her friend Luce and her mother and sister. The 2 or 3 German officers who had quartered themselves on them in their country place behaved politely and they could find nothing to object to in their conduct. Finally one day after lunch one of them said to the Sig.ra Einstein, "whatever happens you will always be protected, let us go into the library and look over your papers to see if there is anything that had better be destroyed." Leaving the sister-in-law and twin nieces in the salon, she and her two daughters went with the German. It was not long before three shots rang out. One of the little nieces rushed frantically to the German posted as sentinel outside the door asking what had happened. She clutched his arm and she begged him to tell her. The tears rolled down his face and he patted her.

But the one who had shot the 3 women, a boy less than 20 years old, appeared with his face radiant with joy exclaiming "Justice has been done!" Then they set fire to the house.

Prof. Einstein coming home soon after (he had been in hiding) started out crazed to seek the Germans to have them kill him, too. He walked and walked but saw no Germans. Finally he fell in with some British who took care of him.

August 27th, 1944

Last night the British pounded away all night-on my head - but I heard none of the enemy, so I was very happy, I thought at last we'd chased them back. Alas! When Gano brought my breakfast he said the reason I had not heard them was because the guns at Settignano and at Fiesole had been in action and were a little too far away for me to hear. Across the river they'd passed a bad night: at 7 p.m. a church had been hit and people within it killed and wounded.

Our poor little Miss Spencer Stanhope is upset by the shelling and almost crazed. She talks incessantly demanding: "My dear Duce, Why doesn't

he come? Tell the Duce to come to me." At last Linda took the role of his daughter and said she was sent to tell her that he sent his salutations but was unable to come. That calmed her a little.

Virgilio is working for the Red Cross at S. Maria Nuova hospital, full of wounded, not enough food nor nurses. He thinks his officers unfeeling to the men. The Allies are going to reorganize the Red Cross entirely he says.

It seems the Germans were occupying the Castel Vincigliata (the 15th century building which was restored by John Temple Leader). Virgilio heard that they had mined it preparing for their departure, but before they got off, the A.A. bombed it, exploding the mines, killing 100 Germans and wounding 80 others.

Sept. 1st, 1944

Everyone agrees that the shelling is less and at longer intervals. At last, relief!

People are putting in an appearance after several weeks of confinement. Isolina Gabrielli came yesterday. She had gone for the state of emergency to a flat in the centre, which a friend lent her. She thought she'd be safer there in the Via Arte della Lana than in her house on Via Garibaldi near us. Well, when the Germans blew up the Por Santa Maria, leading to the Ponte Vecchio (Aug. 3rd) she found herself with a window on that street and up 127 steps from the ground. That same night they mined 5 bridges, Via Guicciardini and Via dei Bardi. Before each blast they gave a warning whistle; then there was a frightful commotion of the air. Her house stood through it all. For 25 nights she slept in a chair in the porter's quarters on the ground floor. She's 70 years old and looks as if a breath could blow her away, so tiny and thin. I said what a comfort it must have been to sleep in her own bed again. "Well," she explained, "when I got home a neighbor who was afraid to be

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alone asked me to come to her, so I moved my mattress to her flat and slept on the floor in her room!"

Concetta brought news that the Baroness Cora had been ill for two weeks with a carbuncle on the nape of her neck. Though gravely ill, she'd had no doctor, but her husband had dressed her neck 4 times a day. There is a cannon in front of her house; she is almost mad with the noise.

Sept. 2nd, 1944

This is really our day for rejoicing over being liberated: for 24 hours we have not heard enemy cannon, the first time since August 5th. I am lost in an abyss of thankfulness.

The red tape necessary to get the supplies provided by the United Nations (?) U.S. (?) for each member of an Allied Nation were almost prohibitive. Armida's niece and her husband offered to undertake the job for me in return for some of the canned meat (for which they paid). They spent altogether 3 mornings of 3 1/2 hours each, wandering from one office to another or standing in line. They climbed over the ruined Por Santa Maria to the Ponte Vecchio and Via Guicciardini, back to the Costa San Giorgio and finally found themselves on the heights of the Boboli gardens from whence they descended to the office in the Pitti. Then on to the Scuderie Reale outside the Porta Romana, where they came by all the articles except the meat and soap! Next day they took the route of the dam across the Arno and got the meat, but still the soap was lacking. Hence the third trip. 10 Phillips meat and vegetable stew, evaporated milk, soap, salt, sugar.

Sept. 4th, 1944

Vita Nuova! Nights without shelling except for sporadic shots from the British cannon. Yesterday morning at 4 to make up for our usual racket, we had a thunder storm. As always the kitchen was inundated and Sig. Leoni and Ascanio had to bale out for an hour or two barefooted, because the water was so deep. I did feel sorry for Ascanio. He'd been

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ill all day (everyone has diarrhea) and unable to eat. However he is better today.

Saturday evening the 2nd, we had the joy of seeing the Sig.na Avitabile. Just 5 weeks before she and her mother had gone off to the hospital for "2 or 3 nights." Four days later the doctor had been sent to manage a first aid post almost in no man's land. It was in a workman's flat building of the Fiat works at Rifredi. The Germans were just across the street. The building was empty. She and a nurse slept in the crèche on 2 little beds put together. The Germans kept advancing and the post was moved further south. Then they slept on long narrow tables - very high - on which the workmen ate. She had 100 Partisans to look after. There were always some wounded coming in. She became attached to them. Finally she was moved to another house where she actually had a bed after three weeks! Now the Germans have retreated and the Partisans are demobilized, so she can return to us and to her patients.

Prof. Enrico Greppi has given her a paragraph in the paper praising her work. He is her head professor and also temporary head of the University. I never saw her look better! she has really gained flesh. She had enough to eat and did not have to walk at all. Since her bicycle was stolen she has worn herself out walking all over town.

Sept. 5th, 1944

I went out yesterday. It was a great occasion for me. For the first time in four years I felt free. I have not kept entirely to the house for four years, but I have never felt safe and comfortable in my short walks. Even the most favored Americans were sent off without warning to Modena or Pistoia, or some equally primitive town to exist as they could.

But yesterday = the joy of feeling that all right-minded people can come and enjoy Florence! If I feel so for the foreigners, how much greater

the happiness of knowing the Italians free from tyranny.

The Lungarno from here appears about the same as ever. San Miniato and the Belvedere look down serenely from the hills on the south; the two domes of the Carmine and Santo Spirito are intact; also the Ponte Vecchio, though one misses a something to the right of it. The other bridges are marked by makeshifts. Under a cloudless sky I forgot the past and rejoiced in the future.