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*For Contents see inside cover.*

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## ABINGER CHRONICLE

SEPTEMBER, 1944.

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# *The Abinger Chronicle*

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*September, 1944*

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## AVE ATQUE VALE

This is the last number of the ABINGER CHRONICLE. Rightly, dear readers, you will find no note of farewell in it, for we shall all of us pursue our ways as heretofore in letters, notebooks, or in more famous old journals or in new ones which have taken the field since the CHRONICLE was born, just after the war began in 1939.

It was a small and happy venture in grim and unhappy times. It was wayward and irregular—there has been no number since August, 1943, and it will not appear again, because its Editor is shortly going abroad on service, and there is no Abingerian with sufficient time to pursue its publication. One day, when men will wrongly envy the times we live in, presuming them great, much as we have inclined to consider the Napoleonic age great, they will find at least one wisp of a paper which enjoyed the old lights, grieved over the present darkness, and felt a little doubtful about the new twilight, lest there be insufficient vigour to turn it into daylight. The wisp of grey paper curls up now with a warm gratitude for the industry of its contributors, the patience of its readers, and the care of its local printer.

Over Abinger Common and woods to-night there hangs a honey-coloured moon. For a moment there is peace, and with peace, memory and hope. *Coelum non animum mutant qui trans mare currunt.*

S.S.

ABINGER COMMON,  
*September, 1944.*

## ABINGER NOTES

Written in a Surrey not free from worry, these notes are unlikely to please the nature-lover. Nor are they documentary enough to interest the historian. They come unaltered from a common-place book which I have had by me for the last twenty years, and local readers may perhaps care to re-write them mentally.

E. M. FORSTER

EVENING WALK round by the yew-wood on the Pilgrims Way that I have kidded myself into thinking terrifying. It isn't. The junipers looked like men, the yew-roots were silvery in the last light, and resembled skeletons or snakes, a ghostly little plant or two waved at the entrance of the great warm cave. . . Yet it isn't, it isn't. And a rabbit moving suddenly in the dark as I came down—it isn't either. The really terrifying things are bacteria or even the small trefoil that spoils my rockery. I have not time to see or feel this. I waddle on under a ruck-sack of traditional nature-emotions, and try to find something important in the English countryside—man-made, easily alterable by man. George Meredith, my predecessor on these downs, could upset himself with a better conscience.

HONEYSUCKLE BOTTOM. The path is blocked by trees that have fallen in the snow. Wild, wild, wilder than the genuine forests that survive in the South of Sweden. I excite myself by learning the names of the woods on the Ordnance Map, by hearing a wry-neck, and by seeing a swallow and a bat—all these pleasures early. Think I will learn the names of all the fields in the parish. Wish I had talked to old men. (April, 1928).

FALLEN ELMS. Have seen so many of them in the past week that I ought to be able to describe them in a few vivid words. All the black outer twigs are crashed and stamped into the earth and stain it like the ghost of a tree. The wood, where it splits, suggests common-



ness, where it is sawn and shows ruddy-chocolate surrounded by white--distinction. Reggie B. showed me the sawn top of a great one used as a table; the old fellow what walks on two sticks says they were put to many uses when he was young, only coffins now. Three fell across the garden, 17 (?) in Hackhurst Lane, one a double elm or cuckold, which broke the steps, one of the pair by the drive-gate has shown a surround of cracks as if it will heel over into the field, one leans across the public path into the wood and rests on three ashes. The flesh of fallen ashes is beautifully pink here and there where sawn, and smells different to the elms, though here again I can't describe or even remember the difference. (1930).

BUNCH OF SENSATIONS. Listening in the late dusk to gramophone records I did not know; smoking; the  $\frac{1}{4}$  moon shone as the light faded, and brought out sections of my books; motors coming down the Felday road shone through the window and flung the tulip-tree-and pane-shadows on the wall-paper near the fireplace. When the music stopped I felt something had arrived in the room; the sense of a world that asks to be noticed rather than explained was again upon me.

CAT IN WOOD washing its face on the grand new oak stump with amphitheatre of hollies behind it. After a time turned and saw me—cat I knew slightly but not in that place. We stared, motionless, but it gradually lowered its head after a bit. I guessed what was up—it wouldn't take its eyes off mine, yet wanted to get them down to a place where they couldn't be on them. A frond of fern was enough, and cat bolted.

THE OLD CRAB TREE near the second chalk-pit on the downs has been blown down this spring (1928), but is flowering as in other years. Neither sad nor glad that this should be, yet my heart beats to its importance. My head and deepest being said, "We approve of your

heart—it is important—but why exercise it over nonsense? Only those who want, and work for, a civilisation of grass-grown lanes and fallen crab-trees have the right to feel them so deeply.” Most people who feel as I do take refuge in the “Nature Reserve” argument, so drearily and tastelessly championed by H.G.W. The moment nature is “reserved” her spirit has departed for me, she is an open-air annex of the school, and only the semi-educated will be deceived by her. The sort of poetry *I* seek resides in objects Man *can't* touch—like England's grass network of lanes 100 years ago, but to-day he can destroy them. The sea is more intractable, but it too passes under human sway. Peace has been lost on the earth, and only lives outside it, where my imagination has not been trained to follow, and I am inclined to agree with Gerald Heard that those who do follow will abandon literature, which has committed itself too deeply to the worship of vegetation. To substitute the worship of motor pumps is unsatisfactory, because it is mere assertiveness, and can never rise out of the advertisement-catalogue atmosphere. The man who says, “Look what I'm doing!” is merely reassuring himself that he has done it. Hence the quantity of empty noises in Walt Whitman.

SANDY FIELD, between Deer Leap and the Railway. Here, a few years ago, three black cinerary urns of the 1st century A.D. were found, the most perfect of which was given to the B.M. by Mrs. E., now herself dead. I saw it there, proffered by a polite colonel, and to-day went to the field. There is a pond, large but difficult to find, and no doubt of the Silent Pool type, for it lies under the down. This was crammed with carp, and when it was cleared out some of them stocked Paddington. Ernest R. told me all this. Up in Deer Leap is a tumulus, spiky with trees, and the field called “Great Slaughter Field” is on the other side. (Great Sloe Tree



*The Giraffe*

Field really). Peaceful feeling after turning out this tiny pocket of history. Pond lies on watershed and drains towards Mole (1935).

## THE GIRAFFE

BY N. GUMILEV

*From the Russian by Jacob Hornstein*

Your eyes are to-night so unusually thoughtful and sad,  
Your hands are so thin round your knees; and your  
mouth will not laugh.

Listen: There roams far away, by the waters of Chad,  
An exquisite beast, the giraffe.

He glides like a ship in the vastness and stillness of  
space,

Approaching, he seems to bewitch all the creatures  
around;

His sails are inflated with winds of adventure and grace,  
He scarcely touches the ground.

He is kingly and straight, and his movements incredibly  
light,

His skin is the play of the sun on the murmuring wave;  
I know that the ostriches witness a wonderful sight,  
When at nightfall he hides in his emerald cave.

I know many tales from the secret abodes of the earth,  
Of Black Maidens and Chieftains, of orgies of passion  
and pain;

But you have been breathing the fog from the day of  
your birth,

You would only believe in the rain.

So how can I tell you of gardens, magnolia clad,  
 Of tropical scents and of parrots that sparkle and laugh?  
 You are crying? Oh, listen: There roams, by the  
     waters of Chad,  
 An exquisite beast, the giraffe.

[*N. Gumilev was a native of Leningrad. He wrote poetry  
 all his life until 1920, when he was shot in Russia*]

## BATTLE LANDSCAPE

Now is the time of metal birds  
 And steel rain:  
 Now is our upholstered landscape toughened  
 And the heart beats its bruised pulses  
 Against hardened hills.

I man, see man and recognize  
 His writhing limbs, the defenceless flesh  
 And its raging root of nerves  
 And feel his thirst and know  
 The ache of his eyes for sight.

I man, seeing man,  
 Jettison my chance of armour  
 In the midst of hail  
 To keep this image vulnerable and mortal  
 In a world of proofed and plated immortality.

IDA PROCTER

## LEAVES FROM A LONDON DIARY

### *The P Plane.*

A few people remember how in 1940 the Air  
 Ministry reports on our big raids over Germany fre-  
 quently noted the return of certain bombers still laden  
 with their bombs, "the pilot having failed to find the  
 target."



*Leaves from a London Diary*

To-day the 'planes are pilotless: P-Planes, an engineer's dream, a planner's ideal, a Thing you launch and have done with, hoping it will reach that square in Southern England which is designated in the P-Plan of the day. Bombing is by districts. Targets no longer count.

This mechanical infantry of the air has come to stay. The next war will doubtless open with storm clouds of exceedingly swift and large pilotless 'planes, travelling from almost any distance. "Sir," as Dr. Johnson might have said, "You will have to take a most active part in the Government of Europe, if you propose to have any voice in the future construction and use of these and similar pests."

*The City's Charm.*

I never expected to meet a creature, outside the Eighteenth Century, and in England, who would vehemently endorse the saying of La Rochefoucauld (was it?), "Quant à moi, je déteste la nature." But she exists and indeed she is a famous writer and a great wit in verse and in conversation; possibly the first among Englishwomen. We shelter together in one of London's great underground dormitories.

I should have said her plight was hopeless, her lot tragic, and her prospects of a calm old age negligible, but for a recent happy discovery here in Abinger, of the only other living true child of London, deep in the gentle joy of a little hay-making for the first time in 70 years. If Max can revel in making hay, maybe there is yet a slender hope for Sagittarius.

*Picking and, or, Eating.*

The cherry crop has been enormous, so was the raspberry crop, and strawberries were not un plentiful. Picking cherries in big, old cherry trees is an occasion

*Leaves from a London Diary*

for happy conversations. Any nonsense can be chattered through the leaves across to a small picker on another ladder. After all the birds talk more in cherry trees than anywhere else, and so do we. The birds talk and peck, occasionally flying off with a whole cherry.

I find I eat as I pick, about four cherries in a dozen. This is not a high standard, but the standard improves along the raspberry canes. There I hesitate after eating two in a dozen. When it comes to strawberries my standard is high—one in twelve—and that one has to have a blemish if I am not to feel badly about it. There are the great saints, the ambitious ones, who pick without eating. I admire them in a way, but I doubt if a sense of duty is burning in them. So often duty is simply another name for doing something because there was no desire or idea of doing a different thing.

Peter, my fellow-cherry picker, aged nine, says that people who pick and never eat must be "nuts."

*Watergate Walk*

Beneath my balcony, here by the riverside,  
between the Strand and slow grey tidal Thames,  
there lies an asphalt walk, some ten feet wide,  
a tiny artery of London's giant heart.  
Along it come a thousand feet at morn,  
along it go a thousand feet at eve;  
a stream of office workers swiftly born  
to waiting typewriters or waiting train.  
From Charing Cross disgorged, they hurry by,  
or pass at night to be engulfed again.  
From Waterloo and Surrey they may hie,  
Middlesex, Kent perhaps, their dormitory.

Achievement's writ upon those morning faces:  
emancipation from the Land and Home,  
new freedom to walk high heeled (or wear braces);



with dainty finger nails and gloves they come.  
 Some had no choice; but many longed for this;  
 the learning how to file, transcribe and 'phone,  
 considering it a higher form of bliss  
 than work by hand, however deftly done.

For this mistake they tread my asphalt way  
 Twixt railhead and their sedentary day.

S.S.

## MY VICTORIAN DAYS

From my long summer in the country I returned home for good in the late 'Seventies. I found myself in the rough-and-tumble of a large family, of which I was the youngest but one.

I expect it has been said that VICTORIA was an institution. I can at any rate vouch for it from my own experience that this was so in middle-class homes. The Mother of the family followed Her at a respectful distance, in the fashion of Her dress, in the way She did Her hair (I remember my mother's black hair smoothly parted and drawn sleekly over the ears, like the Queen's), in Her method of bringing up her children, of which most families seemed to have eight, like the Queen. She got her details and descriptions from the more homely journals; and in addition there were endless portraits of the Royal Family to help her. That again was a Royal fashion largely followed: it was a matter of course, almost, one might say, an eleventh Commandment, "Thou shalt have thy portrait taken." Don't we all know those fat family albums getting more and more disreputable-looking as the years passed, that nobody liked to do away with, though nobody wanted particularly to keep. Yet in their first glory, richly gilt and massive, they lay side by side with the Family Bible on the side-table of every middle-class Victorian drawing-room.

*My Victorian Days*

With the weight of authority over me of six elder brothers and sisters, of my father, of my mother, and of my Queen, all "knowing best," there was not much chance for poor little me to hold opinions of my own, and it never occurred to me to question it. It was not until I was well into my 'teens that I gradually realised that I must assert my own individuality, or be for ever submerged.

I lost the first round of this struggle, which was with my parents. It was on the question of my going to Whitechapel. I had heard from a friend that a Mr. Sidney Lee was studying Shakespeare with a group of working-class people at Toynbee Hall in Whitechapel. He didn't conduct a class, but sat side by side round a table with his fellow-students, as he called them, and talked wisely and listened wisely. The notion appealed to me enormously. I was interested in the subject and in the manner. I was charmed by Mr. Lee's quiet tact: he never laid down the law, but talked friendly and simply, and his vast stores of knowledge seeped in without our being aware of it.

I was met with black looks after these excursions to the East. My Mother thought I might "catch something." My Father objected to the neighbourhood for me as much as she did, and equally disliked the late home-coming. I gave in, to my lasting regret.

Baulked here, I next entered my name as a student at the recently initiated Cambridge University Extension Lectures. This was considered quite respectable, and I met with no opposition. I found myself under the calm academic tuition of Mr. Churton Collins. He was not exciting nor very inspiring, and the atmosphere lacked the thrill of my late adventure; yet he was a painstaking, though orthodox, teacher. We spoke of him among ourselves as "Shirt-and-Collars." The course covered Contemporary English Poetry, and the lecturer had arrived at Tennyson. I shall not easily



*My Victorian Days*

forget the effect on the class of Tennyson's poem "Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height." He gave full value to the musical cadence of the poem, and the rather drowsy voice as it gently rose and fell seemed to have a mesmeric effect on his audience; heads began to nod, bodies to sway gently to the rhythm, as one by one fell under the spell; and when it came to the doves in the "immemorial elms," and the "murmuring of innumerable bees," I felt myself going. . . . going. . . . Whether in the end he read himself to sleep, history does not record.

My next experiment in Life was when I became interested in the new Rights of Women Movement. With a friend I joined one of the many groups that sprang up to study the question: it was called the Pioneer Club, and its slogan was, "They say—What do they say?—Let them say!"

I agreed that to be free a woman must first be free physically, and cheerfully discarded my corsets, or "stays" as we called them then; and stays *were* stays in those days; they were made of stiff material, whale-boned down the front "to support the bust," and tightly laced at the back "to support the spine." I sacrificed the so much admired wasp-waist, but breathed thereafter with savage freedom.

We advanced by stages to economics and politics, and I soon found I must part company with my Queen, for Victoria did not approve of the Movement, though always insisting that her own Rights should be rigorously respected. For the generality of women, she rather favoured the attitude epitomized in the sanctimonious doggerel of the time, part of which sticks in my memory:

The Rights of Women? What are they?

The right to labour, love, and pray.

This summing up of the whole Duty of Woman was in fact just what the New Woman was out to amend.

*Ten Years Ago*

Perhaps it was as well that she did not know that a quarter of a century would pass before she reached her first objective, the Vote.

SARAH SHOREY GILL

## TEN YEARS AGO

Once more awakening the old enchantment  
Of the woods allures me along its paths to wander.  
Overhead giant birch trees are softly swaying  
In scarce-felt breezes their tender leaflets;  
Below rhododendrons build their lofty bowers;  
Around me azaleas their gay buds unfold,  
A hundred harmonies of scent and hue,  
Orange and pink and gold.

Once more there is the bird, the happy songster—  
Five wild sweet notes, then a silence, then five more—  
Never the same; but the rapture changes never.  
Oh what is it then that has changed?  
Why do the old spells bind not?  
With the same sunlight the great oaks and the slender  
    birches glow;  
The glory of the flowers is still the same  
As when ten years ago  
Into these woods, that he so loved, together  
For the last time we came. Now he is gone;  
And I come here alone.

R. C. TREVELYAN



## MEMORY

BY NICOLAI GUMILEV

*Translated from the Russian by Jacob Hornstein.*

Only serpents change their outward skin  
 And permit their souls to grow and age.  
 But alas! We, men, are not their kin,—  
 We discard our souls and not the cage.

Memory, who with a mighty hand  
 Leads our lives to some uncertain aim,  
 You will tell of those who lived and planned  
 In this shape of mine, before I came.

Number one: he loved the forests' dark,  
 Little wizard, thin and rather plain,  
 He knew every leaf and every bark,  
 And spoke magic words to stop the rain.

One wild dog and one wild tree he chose,  
 As his friends, to live with him and die.  
 Memory, you never would suppose,  
 Anyone could think that he was I.

And the second loved the southern wind,  
 Every noise, he said, was music sweet;  
 He called life his girl who never sinned,  
 And the world—a mat beneath his feet.

I don't like him, nor his lust to shine  
 As a god for mortals to adore;  
 It was he who pinned the poet's sign  
 On my modest dwelling's silent door.

I prefer that freedom's knight and bowman,  
 Sailor, roamer, hater of the crowds,

Who could watch the skies and read their omen,  
Loved by oceans, envied by the clouds.

High upon the hills he built his tent,  
And his mules were strong and unafraid;  
Like some fragrant wine he drank the scent  
Of the land he was the first to tread.

Was it someone else, or was it he,  
(Memory, you weaken more and more),  
Who exchanged his happy liberty  
For the long-awaited holy war?

He knew nightmares in his endless quest,  
Thirst and hunger in the roadless maze;  
But St. George touched twice his iron breast  
Which a bullet never dared to graze.

I am now the stubborn architect,  
Jealous of my predecessors' fame,  
Trying arduously to erect  
The Cathedral that shall burn like flame.

So my heart will burn and mind condemn,  
Till the glorious day when there will stand  
Golden walls of New Jerusalem  
In the pastures of my native land.

Eerie winds will blow and bless the hour,  
And the skies will send a blinding ray  
From the planets, stars and suns in flower  
In the gardens of the Milky Way.

Then a stranger with a hidden face  
Will appear,—and I shall know and break,  
When I see the lion's kingly pace  
And the eagle flying in his wake.



I shall know: and where the road divides  
 I shall cry for help, without reply . . .  
 Only serpents can discard their hides,—  
 We must change our souls—and see them die.

## HYMN OF THANKSGIVING FOR OLD AGE

Now God be thanked a few short years  
 May speed me from this senseless place,  
 Its follies, agonies and fears,  
 The incorrigible human race.

Let others struggle, hope and plan  
 A better world that can't be won,  
 For me, the only good that can—  
 Oblivion.

O. HESELTINE

## THE PAINTER, THE SLAVE WOMAN AND THE ROSE

*(From the Chinese of Ka-Tri-Na)*

One day the Court Painter Ke-La sat idly before the silken scroll whereon he had drawn a portrait of the Princess. In vain he sought a radiant luminous colour for her robe.

His little Slave Woman sat silently beside him. She never spoke when the Master was perplexed, but she looked at the Rose in the jade vase near by.

The Rose trembled and dropped its deepest petal close to her hand.

"Look, Master," she said, "the Rose has given you her Heart."

The Master smiled and took up his brush.

C. KERR LAWSON

## PATROLLING IN THE APPENINES

*The following are extracts from a letter from Richard Bosanquet, Royal West Kent Regiment, an occasional contributor to the Abinger Chronicle.*

*March, 1944*

As is the custom with troops which have not had experience of battle, we were first put into a quiet sector of the line. It was in the hills about 2000 feet up. Neither side had any serious idea of attacking there, and the nearest enemy position was some 800 yards away. It was ideal country for patrolling, because between them and us lay a series of hills and valleys which constituted No Man's Land. Our main job was to dominate this by means of our patrols.

A second in command of a Company is supposed to confine himself chiefly to administrative duties. But you are aware that it was not for that I returned to the battalion, and I was glad when an opportunity arose for me to go out on patrol. I was on duty at Company H.Q. one night when one of our patrols came in and reported that they had found no enemy. It was a filthy night, bitterly cold, the sleet having turned into a snowstorm. Visibility was about 5-10 yards, and they had been unable to find one of the places which they had been ordered to visit. McD., one of our platoon commanders, who had been commanding the patrol, came in absolutely soaked to the skin, trembling all over with cold and his teeth chattering. He had with him twelve men as wet and cold as himself, but we had no change of clothing to give them, and we could not let them take off their boots or clothes at night. So I could only give them rum and tell them to lie down in their wet clothes.

Five minutes later the C.O. rang up to say that since visibility was so bad that McD.'s negative report



*Patrolling in the Appenines*

was almost valueless another patrol must go out later in the night, when the moon would be up to confirm his finding. Only a small patrol of an officer and two or three others was necessary. I said O.K. I should have to hurry if I was going to get done by first light.

It is never satisfactory going out at short notice without being properly briefed or looking at the ground beforehand. But fortunately I had studied our air photo and the ground in front of us pretty thoroughly during the previous days. So I got two men up, briefed them hurriedly over the air photo, warned our own platoons that we should be coming back through them, took my batman's tommygun and a couple of grenades, and at a quarter to one we set off.

Patrolling is one of the most extraordinary operations of war. It has been described, with some truth, as the safest type of warfare. It is war in its most primitive and most individual form. And from the point of view of the individual it is perhaps the least hideous, the most dramatic and even thrilling of the operations of war. It is you, by yourself, in the dark, against the enemy.

We moved by bounds. I went forward some twenty to fifty yards and then lay down, watching and listening while the other two came up to me. They lay down and I got up and went forward again. The ground was steep and very rocky. But the snow soon stopped falling and the two or three inches of it which covered the ground muffled the noise of our boots. As there was also a good wind the chances of our being heard were slight. But visibility was very good, with the rising moon and the whiteness of the snow. We could see very clearly two or three hundred yards and dimly much further. I knew that we could also be seen very clearly. We felt very naked, crawling over the alien earth. The leeward side of the rocks where the snow had not fallen

*Patrolling in the Appenines*

stood out very black. And every black spot looked like a man lying ready. One's imagination sharpened to a degree which you would hardly believe. Every shadow assumed a human form. The rocks moved. One located a man quite definitely. One looked around, and there was the rest of his section in tactical positions surrounding one. One lay petrified, and watched as one of them clearly raised his rifle to fire. And it was nothing. One's ears too played queer tricks. One lay for long, listening to a man moving not five yards away, only to discover that it was one's own breathing. One's heart leapt to one's mouth as a cough came from behind a rock. A perfectly definite human cough; it couldn't be anything else. And yet it was only a twig scraping the surface of the rock.

I learned a lot on that move out to our farthest objective, which I proposed to visit first. I learned, to start with, that on a small patrol such as this the officer is the patrol. The officer has to do everything; the others play a very minor part. For this reason most officers prefer to go out with very few men, and some like going quite alone. I don't; I like having two men with me. This is partly because one has to keep the very tightest hold on one's nerves and imagination to prevent one becoming "windy." Or rather, since one is bound to be windy, to prevent one's windiness from affecting one's actions. The presence of someone else, before whom one must keep up certain appearances, steadies one's actions, and in doing so steadies one's judgment. If he is a good man he can also confirm or not confirm what one really does see. But this should be unnecessary so far as it concerns any information which you have to take back; for one must be so absolutely and undeniably certain of that information that confirmation is unnecessary. I also like having two men with me because they can watch and warn me of any danger,



*Patrolling in the Appenines*

thereby leaving me free to concentrate on the real work of the patrol. If you have two men they can between them watch every direction. It also gives me a feeling of confidence to have two armed men with me to help me out of a sticky corner. This feeling is largely illusory, as they could not in fact do very much. But still, they would help; and anything which increases one's confidence increases one's ability and the value of the results which one is likely to achieve.

I also learned on the way out that in order to be successful at patrolling one must cultivate a certain outlook which might be described as controlled carelessness. I say "controlled" because one has to be most careful not to make a noise, to move by the best possible route, to notice everything on the way and so on. But one must, I am convinced, become careless of danger. Every time one gets up alone to move forward, one sees things which may be men, just waiting to fire at you. But if each time one waits until one is perfectly convinced that they are not men one will never get anywhere. One would spend half an hour on each bound, and end up with a nervous breakdown. The only way is to say to oneself: "Well, I might as well die this time as the next" and get up and go forward. You see, there are two attitudes which one can adopt. One can say that the more careful you are, the less likely you are to be killed. Or you may say that it is just a question of luck and you either will or won't be killed, without one's own actions making very much difference. There is a good deal of truth in both attitudes. But for patrolling one definitely must adopt the latter; if you don't, you will never be successful at patrolling. Fortunately I had done a good deal of the psychological spadework beforehand, so that attitude came naturally to me. But I can assure you that I had to use it at every bound, and it served me in good stead. McDowell tells me he

*Patrolling in the Appenines*

gets letters from his wife in which she says, "Take care of yourself." It is exactly what one must *NOT* do on patrol. And that is why I describe the right attitude as one of controlled carelessness.

We moved thus for about an hour on a compass bearing, covering about 800 yards, which is a fairly normal rate of progress. As far as possible I concentrated on keeping direction, being quite certain of our position, noticing the lie of the land, and so on, leaving the other two to watch our immediate security. The hills looked slightly different from what I could remember of the air photo, and so I decided to confirm my position by going forward over the next crest. If we were where I thought we were, we should find a farm there which was thought to be occupied by the enemy. We went forward in short bounds. For going over a sky line is never a pleasant moment, and we were near the enemy. As I had foreseen, we could see the farm. It was slightly further off than I had expected, about 200 yards. It was surrounded by a 4-foot wall enclosing a large area, so that the wall was only just in front of us. I went through a gap in the wall and started to move along the inside of it, when to my surprise and alarm I heard a cough from a manger built into the wall about ten yards from where I was. No doubt about it this time. My nerves were strained, but I knew that this time I had made no mistake. I froze to the spot and looked across at the opposite wall of the enclosure 200 yards away. There I could see something the size of a man moving along the wall. I took a pull at myself and looked again. Again there was no doubt about it: that form was moving. Obviously the wall surrounding the farm was held by the enemy, which I had not previously suspected. I moved silently, but oh so rapidly, back to the gap in the wall and over the crest again into the safety of the valley. There I settled down for a minute or two to think. The farm was off my beat and



*Patrolling in the Appenines*

I had only gone there to get my bearings; but I had got useful information about it and was pleased. Furthermore I was now certain of my position and could get on with my real job.

Little remains to be told. I didn't know the exact location of the places that I had to visit, and so I beat around all the area where I thought they were. I was getting very tired now and becoming more and more careless, in the bad sense of the word. I made a lot of noise when moving. But my confidence increased, as is bound to be the case when one is returning to one's own lines instead of moving towards the enemy. So I fairly beat about the hills without fear, treating them as our own. I found nothing at two of the places I had to visit and spent a long time looking in vain for another place which I had not been told to visit but which I was interested in. I had one other place, a house just in front of our lines, which I had been told to investigate. But by this time first light was rapidly approaching and fatigue was overcoming me. So as I could not find it immediately I left it and went back.

I sent my two men to bed with some rum, had a tot myself, and breezed along to Battalion HQ. feeling as if I personally had won the war. Inside the tent I found Michael huddled up in a greatcoat and looking very fed up. This cooled my ardour considerably, but he brightened up slightly as I went through with him on the air photo exactly where I had been and what I had seen. The C.O. got up in the middle and was enthusiastic, confirming my belief that I had won the war, or at least contributed vital information towards the winning of it! When I got back to my own Company I was absolutely dead beat and slept until evening.

[Lt. Bosanquet was killed in action in Italy this summer.—S.S.]

## PEAR TREE COTTAGE

(Helford, Cornwall)

My Cornish Pear tree is in blossom. Looking up at its branches against the blue sky is like gazing into fairyland. Its shape is unusual, for it is an espalier and once upon a time was trained against an old shed (now removed) that stood in front of the cottage. In form therefore it is perhaps slightly eldritch, because now, its support gone, it stands with its old limbs outstretched as-it-were into nothingness, a little lost. By moonlight, indeed, there is something of the witch about it. But it is beneficent. My tame Robin has one lower, favoured branch and the Blue Tits roam all over it unceasingly. I am amazed at the number of birds I have seen either on the tree itself or on the small, walled terrace where it grows. One Winter on that snowy wall a Kingfisher alighted. I have watched a Tree-Creeper, searching for insects, there too. A Golden-Crested Wren appears frequently and, this Spring, perched on a rose spray that almost brushed the window-panes of the cottage; it looked into the room, ruffling its feathers and "displayed" its flaming bar. Long-Tailed Tit, Great, Blue, Coal, Marsh—all have come at various times—and that indomitable Migrant, the Chiff-Chaff, has rubbed shoulders with Gold Finch, Green Finch or Jenny Wren. Once, when the weather was very cold, Seagulls came in search for food and hung around mournfully.

My cottage is whitewashed and, just now, in April, I have a great number of pink and deep-red tulips growing in the borders that are made against its masonry. Also a small bed crammed with Brick-coloured polyanthus. Aubretia hangs from the outer coping of the terrace wall and soon large clumps of deep red Valerian will flower there also, showing up handsomely from the Creek waters below it. For Pear Tree Cottage stands on a tidal Creek and sometimes this is deep flooded,



*Pear Tree Cottage*

with Swans and Seagulls adrift on it, and sometimes (may it be confessed) it is empty save of mud, tins and an old boot or two. Once, in a storm, the Creek overflowed. On that day boats were smashed and an inhabitant had all her coal washed away. A rare bird, a Great Northern Diver, was rescued then, but died soon after. A good stock of drift wood presented the only palliative for our troubles.

In late May and early June all the old cottages are smothered in roses. I have a double-pink variety on mine and a more beautiful single moon-coloured climber whose blossoms are like chalices of light. During these months the Pear Tree has silken leaves of green. One of my visitors last year, a young writer, used to live in Italy before the War, where he wrote books and kept bees. I gave him and his companion honey for tea. My pansies were out then, and he said that they had Machiavellian faces.

When, later in the year, the sun becomes really hot, we sit in the shadow of the Pear tree, the only cool spot on that shining terrace. Its leaves have then lost their silkiness and transparency. They have become of a heavy, opaque green and, in place of the fragile blossom, there hangs the rapidly-forming fruit.

V. S. WAINWRIGHT

### THE POET OTHERWISE OCCUPIED

She, having dainty beauty to delight  
 Her lover, and a rightful care for duty  
 And the sweet air of one fresh from the clear  
 And open fields, whose coming into sight  
 To the gay scene a dearer pattern yields,  
 Does in her sweet performance neither fail  
 Nor hesitate nor anything withhold.

*Penelope in April*

Her lover, to enfold so many graces  
 In his arms daily and to pass the night  
 Too soon away with fleeting small caresses  
 Especially delights, and makes his song  
 In praise of her not overlong or flowing  
 Well knowing that time lost never recurs  
 And liking loving more than writing verse.

KENNETH HOPKINS

## PENELOPE IN APRIL

You were not there yet came to me  
 Across St. James' Park—  
 Light so the plane, with sun dappled bark!  
 Down fall of poplars white  
 Willow weeping pear—  
 Fountains, wild fountains, of blossom on the air!  
 Swan's crown, Flower shells,  
 Dew upon my lawn.  
 Heart beat to Heart stay  
 Still centering Morn.

GEOFFREY ELEY





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Vol. IV.	„	5	„	(1943)
Vol. V.	„	1	„	(1944)

Vols. I., II. and III. are sold out. Full collections are filed at the British Museum and at the Bodleian, Oxford.

