

Escalles - From June 15th to July 26th 1940

June 15th

Returned home, finally, very tired after a long and rather weary walk of some 27 or 30 km. With my wretched ill-fitting clothes and my unlengthed beard, I certainly looked very much like a tramp and my own family would have found it difficult to recognise in me their usual well-dressed Daddy.

I arrived just at the moment when first Germans were entering the cottage by our bedroom window, for Mme Pezron was out in the village; Mr Boutroy was there and helped the men to get installed. They took the end room, using the two beds and “borrowing” two other mattresses to put on the floor. Mme Pezron was soon back and very soon all was in order.

I rejoiced in three or four big cups of milk and had hoped for a good night’s sleep, but the soldiers talked loudly till after midnight and were continually tramping about on the gravel – probably taking their turns on guard – whilst other soldiers continually came and tried our main door, kicking at it to wake us. They did not realise that the entry to their comrades was by the other door; consequently rather poor night’s rest and probably too, I was too tired and too upset to sleep.

So far I can gather Gisele got back to Boulogne somehow and managed to embark on Wednesday 22nd May. Now I have to find out if she got across safely and unhurt. I do not think she was wounded before, because if so, she would not have been able to reach Boulogne. I trust that she is safe and she has seen the boys, and this is happier. Poor child – it is the first time that she had to face any really bad experience without my help all the time. If she is safe and has the boys near her, she will bear my enforced absence better, though she is bound to be very anxious about me. I try each night to concentrate my thoughts on her and each of the boys in turn and to transmit to them my thought and that I am safe and in good health: if there is any truth in the transference of thought, they must now feel that I am still with them. I pray God each day to transmit my thoughts to them.

June 16th

Spent the day inside, arranging Gisele’s and the boys’ clothes, etc... in different drawers, doing the best possible to make everything tidy. In the morning, the Germans searched the house, probably for firearms, though I cannot understand them at all. They have taken the boys’ bicycle – it is apparently useless to protest. Noisy night.

June 17th

Spent this day like the 16th, having moved our things from the little WC Germans have pilfered our things a bit – sugar from Mme Pezron and some addments from the brown leather trunk. Got things looking more shipshape. Noisy night.

June 18th

Set off at 10am German time and visited friends on the way to Calais. Eventually reached Calais at 6pm not at all tired. I am getting to be a good walker now that I have lost so much superfluous weight. Went and tried to find John. But a notice on the door of the factory led me to his partner. After a chat, he took me round to the lady who looks after the lace packing. She gave me a little supper and her son took me along to John's flat where I spent the night. John got away on a boat from Calais – autocarrier, I think- but its sailing was kept secret. Gangloff went. I had a really good night's sleep – very quiet and peaceful in Calais, with water, gas and electricity, all functioning.

June 19th

Began the day with a hot bath at John's flat, had breakfast there, etc... Then went out to see if either British or American consul was still in Calais: both offices closed. Then to call at Mme Perrin's for news of Gisele and for the address of Mme Deguines who helped her. That closed. Returned rue des Quatre Coins : all our furniture has gone – burnt up with their building in rue Edison. Met Romain and had a long talk with him. He told me that Dutnall is still in Calais. Later, returned to see Mme Perrin. She did not recognise me at first, gave me the address of Mme Deguines. Then I went to see Dutnall. He gave me a great welcome and some lunch. He is living near Ardres and offers me hospitality if I have to move from Escalles. He gave me all the Calais' news. Sharp apparently left on Tuesday in a borrowed car and no one has any news of them since. Tuesday's boat got across safely. I left there late, called at the flat to pick up my stick and sack, left the keys and then walked back to here in 2 hours and 10 minutes.

The Germans had left on Tuesday afternoon. Mme P. had had a peaceful night. But nine or ten men had just come in. They took down the bedroom door and the two beds from the end room and put them in the garage and brought in more mattresses of their own. Although about nine or ten, they are much quieter than the previous five. They fetch water and help Mme P. in return for the use of the kitchen from time to time. I notice that the butt-end of one of the boys' fishing rods has now disappeared – probably taken by one of the five. Saw a notice in Calais stating that Germans cannot take bicycles belonging to civilians within a radius of 20 km of Calais, so I will prepare the bike soon and use it.

Almost all Calais' English have left, including Brampton and the Soies Artificielles. It is a pity that the American consul has gone – there is a big need of a neutral consul at the moment.

Dutnall gave me a packet of tobacco. I forgot to say that I had one of my own at the cottage on the 15th, very welcome after a long period without any. Still it is no great hardship and I can get used to being without very easily.

English planes bombed Calais today.

June 20th

At home. A French friend came to lunch. We had been together a day or two before. We enjoyed our day, particularly as the Germans here seem to be decent – perhaps because we dressed a bad sore on the finger of one of them in the morning. Perhaps too because the war so far as France is concerned seems to be over and the population is taking the occupation with courage. I gave my friend 2 cigars, 12 cigarettes, 1/2 packet of tobacco, 2 old packs of playing cards and a small chemist's bottle of whisky of which there was one bottle left.

Reasonably quiet night.

June 21st

The Germans went off about 6am but are returning certainly as they have left their kit. Did some gardening, butting up the several lots of haricots. The garden is full of weeds and I shall settle down to it as soon as I get the house straightened up and things stewed away in odd places, out of the way.

This afternoon whilst I was writing up this diary as from the 15th of June, some planes, English I suppose, came over bombing. It was evident that they avoided the village and went for odd works that the Germans are doing in the vicinity- no doubt between here and Sangatte, because the road is barred to us civilians. Mme P. and I refuge in the trench shelter in the garden, near the strawberry bud made by Mr Perrin's father.

And now after all this period, I have some ideas and thoughts, which I would like to record.

1° I find that the French population is very definitely biased against the French army, which has apparently shown very little fight. It is this wretched period since the last war, where youth has run wild and when youth have ceased to be able to amuse itself and to have useful hobbies for spare time; instead, that spare time has been given to cafes and cinemas. In other words, youth is now too lazy to do much to amuse itself and instead pays for its amusements. That is, I think, the principal cause of the debacle. But also, the French seem to be very incensed against their politicians- they have paid heavy taxes, etc... but their army has been insufficiently equipped and also possibly not with the best materiel.

2° The German army has achieved the most shipendous military success in history. Their soldiers are well-built men, young, alert, evidently well fed. They are clean, obviously wear their uniforms with pride and are a body of men totally different from the French troops we had in Escalles during the past winter.

During my travels, I saw their motos columns moving on the roads: perfect route discipline with vehicles some distance apart and no "concubine" effects when the leading vehicle stopped. In addition, they seem to make the greatest possible use of all roads and do not confine themselves to the use of the main arteries, which thus are never encumbered. More, they must have a very complete and detailed knowledge in advance of the countryside for they use all kinds of tracks to reach the cover of woods to hide their vehicles.

I remember well the wonderful organisation of 1917, when the Germans retired from the Somme to the Hindenberg line: every house was demolished, every single tree cut, every plank, every sheet of corrugated iron or tarred felt, etc... was destroyed. Nothing was left behind, which could be of use to us when we advanced and it is evident that they have the same gift of organisation and that they use it to the full. For the French man doing a job it is: "Ca ira", but for the German it must be: "Ca va". It is this organisation and the French disorganisation, which has brought about the fate of France today.

3° There have been small incidents of pilfering here to which I have made allusion: doors kicked to help them open. But one must take the thing calmly and realise that the men in the army are men of a conquering army too. In a hostile country some of these men just do these things to show that they are new masters of the situation. As more peaceful days come, manners will also become more peaceful and things will settle down.

4° It must be said that Germans have waged this war with what humanity is possible in war. Calais is a proof of this: for in St Pierre the only damage is that caused by the short fighting, whilst Calais-Nord, with its Citadelle and docks and its more determined resistance is simply a pile of bricks today, due largely to bombing. Thus they bombed military

objectives only. If civilians were near by, that was by their own fault or by misfortune. People criticised too that civilians were bombed and machine-gunned on the roads; they were, but the fault lies with the French army authority, which should have proscribed certain roads for civilian traffic. If civilians use roads which are used for military conveyances, such civilians must do so at their own risk. It is unfair to blame the Germans, I think. Evidently the French had a probably hopeless task in trying to canalise the refugee traffic – and possibly also the flight of those refugees towards France and the south was encouraged by the Germans as it gave them a definite military advantage by hampering troop movement on our side. Ever so, there remains the example of Calais. And this proves too the marvellous precision, which their bomb-sighting instruments must have. The Germans have always led the world in the manufacture of such instruments. They have not used gas thank God! For I saw its results in the last war.

5° Now I turn to self and wonder about my own future. I am an English man and England is still at war with Germany. Possibly, if an armistice is signed between France and Germany, all English subjects resident in France may have to go to internment Camps. I hope not for, after all, I have spent 21 years in France in peaceful commerce, my wife is French and my boys can, if they wish, become French – they are considered as French now by the French authorities. It may be asked why, after so long a sojourn in France I have not become French myself. To that I reply that as a point of honour having been born with one nationality, I stick to that nationality. Again, if I become French, my boys would also become French and so become liable for military service. And as a citizen soldier of the 1914-18 war, I have seen enough of war and do all I could to keep my sons out of one. War is senseless and however “humanly” it may be waged, it brings terrible and needless suffering to many.

6° My position here, if it were known that I was an English man, might be intolerable. The Germans, with war hate still against England, might simply devastate this little home. The village people probably know that I am English but accept me as a French man because I have spent, including the last war 26 years out of 49 of my life in their country. The danger comes from the children who might easily let slip to the Germans that there is an Englishman in the village. Happily I can garden, walk to Calais via Peuplingues, have lots of things to do in the house and so can get exercise and occupation, and meanwhile, I shall continue to wear the beard!

7° It may well be too that some day, Escalles and the whole coastline will be evacuated by order, by the civil population: this would become necessary probably if an attempt at landing was made by the English on this coast. I hope to prepare soon a few things for such an eventuality but think likely that, if it does come to pass, we shall leave with what we can carry.

8° The Germans, talking yesterday, spoke confidently of reducing England in a fortnight, principally with aeroplanes. England’s situation seems pretty difficult, for Germany faces her from the western end of the Brittany coast to the north of Norway and can attack in several places at the same time. England has a very determined foe to face: if England, after the last war, had had even one county devastated, this present war would never have occurred. Now she faces devastation over a much wider area; if England wins, it will be a lesson to her. But, to win, concert parties for soldiers and afternoon tea and easy chairs have to be cut out altogether and the war must not be regarded as a sporting football match.

9° I am very full of sympathy for the French, for in very many ways, after long years of hospitality in their country, I feel almost one of them: particularly so, here in Escalles where I have begun to garden and to feel Frenchman’s joy in his soil- the soil of France.

I think that Gisele will be alright for money for certainly the AA will see her through and meanwhile she has £200 to start with, although she must spend a lot in order to get clothes and so on.

Here I have about 1500Fr and of course I can not get more from the bank: Barclays was closed at Boulogne on the 21st, if not earlier and had moved to Bordeaux; since, they have probably left Bordeaux also. Still, a friend in Calais can let me have a few thousand francs if necessary. How long will money last, however? Whatever happens, if I am allowed freedom of movement, I shall live in the country where food is plentiful and cheaper than in town. Here we have eggs, milk, butter and bread and there is always an occasional rabbit or some salted pork: I am better in health for the diet of the last month.

But this last month has seemed like very many years to me, with each hour filled with anxiety, not about my own skin, but about the safety of my dear wife and sons. If only my thoughts can reach them and allay their anxiety about myself. I can go through anything, however hard it can be, as I shall always have the hope of a reunion with them. So far, Providence has protected me: may Providence protect them too and bring us happily together once more.

How long will it be?

June 22nd

The Germans were out all night-probably an "alerte" on- so we had a very peaceful night and slept well.

Spent the whole day gardening, weeding out the peas, which will be ready in two or three days, one path and planting more haricots and two lines of salad. Hot day. Rain is needed very badly indeed.

Binkie's lin is carrying on quite well on the front bed; the haricots shaped bed has not done well at all, neither nigella, lin nor gypsophile has taken. Some of Maurice's candytuft and nigella doing well. Roses are going to be magnificent-in fact there is not one rose tree in the garden, which is not just a mass of buds: what a pity not to be all here to see it...

The back of my neck is rather raw with sunburn, but on the whole, I have enjoyed my day and feel that I have done something useful.

Mme Pezron dug over the line of leeks planted by the boys, not recognising them, so I have no leeks to lay out and must try to get others from the villagers. Mme Vendrôme has some to spare.

Mme P. is rather full of complaints-says she has never had a harder month in her life than since she came here, has been putting all kinds of things away in all kinds of corners, hidden by clothes, papers, etc... so that the place really looked more untidy at the onset. She had put all my English books in the bottom of the lavabo: they are out again on the shelf now, as I must wash. I think her idea is that if the whole place looks an untidy mess no one will ever search with the idea of pilfering valuables! Well, I just can't stand that and am getting shipshape, bit by bit. I don't think she appreciate at all living rent free and with the garden produce at her hand for nothing.

June 23rd, Sunday

Germans again out all night, son another peaceful night. Still, we are not yet used to the German time, which is one hour ahead of French summer time.

Lifted two potato plants this morning: found perfect potatoes-10 or 11 per plant. I have 82 plants and thus a supply for 6-7 weeks at least; am glad that they have done well.

I have a feeling that Gisele is now worrying a lot about the silver and jewellery: its loss can not be helped; it would have been better to bury it all here, if there had been time to do so. Anyway, such decisions are taken for better or worse and I hope that she will no longer worry about this. We are both alive and this is the main thing.

It seems evident that Germany is treating France in a totally different way to that in which she treated Poland: curiously enough, Germany still apparently has a certain respect for world opinion and stages, put-up shows where Germans are carrying out kindly acts for filming purposes and ultimate propaganda. Their idea is no doubt that all is fair in love and war: their acts-disguise, other uniforms, etc-appear to us to be dishonourable but to them all ruses are considered fair. –I forgot to note that the dog, Vic, left on the 17th. Mme P. thought he had followed me but it is sure that the Germans took him. He was making himself rather a nuisance to Mme P. and in the garden. He was always out at other people's cottages or farms-perhaps looking for extra food- and so was getting unpopular. I'm glad he has gone, for I could not exercise him or train him under present conditions.

This afternoon, I have sorted out a packet of photos, which represent all our married life and tied them up in a paper cover for Gisele: am leaving them in the sitting-room; eventually, I shall probably put the boys' valise marked "photos" in some other further corner of the cottage, so that if the sitting-room end is hit, something may be saved as photos and films.

Mme Alloy and daughter have been in to say bonjour. Germans say that France signs armistice or peace tonight- Pétain and Hitler- at the carrefour de l'armistice. Poor France! If it is true!

Mme Roussel also came in and later on Emile brought me two packs of tobacco, having heard that I was without – he absolutely refused to be paid as it was French "troupe" tobacco, which he had had free. This is just another of those acts of human kindness which so many have shown to me in the last month; it shows the innate decency of human nature and the willingness of mutual service, though often it needs hard times such as these to bring it to the surface.

I am more sorry about the loss of Maurice's stamp collection than any other loss. Poor lad, after ten years patient effort and care, he had got a good collection together and war has taken this from him. If I come through safely, I shall start him off again, although I think Gisele will already have done so or will do so very soon; I found the valise empty, in the larder cupboard, in the dinning-room.

Germans in, one after the other, from 6pm onwards; they seem to eat 4-6 eggs at each meal.

June 24th

Day spent entirely in the garden. Cleaned up the carrot bed and planted two more lines: salad, parsley and cerfeuil. I seem to talk a lot about the garden; but it is my one interest now and it is really most important for I have to plan out things for winter eating too; with the Germans here, food supplies will also be quickly exhausted. The farmers go on with their work, but in a half-hearted way, feeling that it is quite likely that the Germans will eventually have the whole coastline evacuated and utilise the crops themselves.

Mme Roussel has bought me a bottle of wine and some biscuits-another kindly act, for we have nothing here and I cannot cut out wine, even when available, in case money runs out. So far, I have given Mme P. 130F and we seem to be doing quite well, having made a rabbit run to six meals for two.

Today we have had new potatoes, new carrots and the first peas with a slice of lard: very good and some left for tonight. Germans have been out most of the day but probably will soon turn up ravenous for an evening meal: last night, they came in at 10pm to ask for hot water for coffee, so the fire had got to be going again; still this lot is quiet and generally decent and polite, though firm.

I have found flypaper, which is doing yeoman service; now I am trying to think of a way of inventing homemade flypaper. The WC, with all these Germans using it are a mess and we have to avoid it. Last night a German from some other billet came to ask whether he could use it, but I sent him about his business and told him to go where he was logged or anywhere else but here.

I understand that money can be obtained at the banks, but that each payment must be first of all authorised by the German commandant of Calais. Perhaps I can change a cheque at the Société Générale, but I doubt it. Still perhaps I can give a cheque to the Chamber de Commerce for rent or to the percepteur for taxes: such a cheque might get through to the bank at Bordeaux for payment (Barclays') and perhaps then Mr Horsly would think of advising the London branch that I have drawn a cheque on a certain day; then London would tell Gisele and make her and the boys happier. The cheque will be on ordinary paper for I have no chequebook, lost with the rest...

Meanwhile, I try each night to transmit my thoughts to Gisele and the boys, telling them that I am alive and well. I hope that Gisele has now gone over the fright and terror of those last two days and that it has not affected her nervous system.

Mme Bourdon has given me some Romaine salads for repiquage: so I have another busy day gardening in view for tomorrow; Hard work as the ground is very hard and dry-no rain for six weeks, worth to talk about it. German airplanes seem rather active this evening.

Have learnt that the bodies of two English soldiers have been cast up on the shore. Emile and another are to bury them tomorrow: why the Germans don't do it, I don't know. But they tell the French that they have no grudge against them but that they will cut the throats of all English. Probably, if they were in England they would have orders to say the same thing about the French!

The village boys have started playing football again-not on Butez's field but behind our cottage now.

Had a chat with Mr Trincourt today over the garden wall: he is well as usual and his house is free.

I have the feeling that I am living rather dangerously, that the Germans may become really heated up against the English once they have finished off poor France, then one may well carry one's life in one's hands. Well, I hope to be able to live bravely if danger is real so as to get through alive and join, even if only for a very short spell of life, those who are dear to me.

June 25th

Planted 36 salads in the onion bed, cleaned up left hand triangle and planted two short lines of chicoree, started weeding one path, planted a few radishes also.

Morning swallows-three of them-sit on the wire near the east corner of the garden and stay there in line whilst the parent birds come to feed them. I like their confidence and feel their friendship. Life is rather lonely...

The Alloy family live in the rue de Strasbourg. He is chief accounting clerk to the Chamber of Commerce in Calais. They have gone to Calais-Nord today to see what remains of

their furniture, etc... People are allowed to go bit by bit to certain streets, which are indicated in advance. I hear that Noël's house is partly safe. By the way, I have not seen him yet.

The Germans have told us this evening that an armistice is signed as between France, Germany and Italy. Perhaps it is: one does not know what to believe. Young Butez says that all the French troops in England are to return in France: perhaps if that is true, English civilians like myself will also be able to return to England?? I hope that there is a chance of this.

One German was rather drunk, though not offensive. The others were absolutely sober- they drink very little. Still, I have wedged the heavy leather trunk against the door leading to the vestibule from Mme P.'s bedroom. Still I think they will all be out all night again on duty.

I have wondered what those red letters, S.R. painted on our garden wall mean. I saw many red crosses (ordinary crosses and Croix de Lorraine) on trees and at cross roads, etc. and have wondered whether these were Germans' markings made in 1938 or 1939 by their agents.

A German officer, who speaks a little French came round and wanted to let his men here (11) enlarge and use our shelter trench in the garden in case of bombardment. I pointed out to him that it would destroy the whole plot, that we too, wanted it. He agreed and arranged to make trenches for his men in the pastures on both sides of the cottage instead. Quiet night by ourselves.

June 26th

More gardening. But this afternoon, I have made up a list in my book (concluding accounts) of the Calais furniture and its values and also the Escalles furniture and its values too. So that, if I am not spared, Gisele may perhaps be able to claim. She must not think that the lists are accurate- they are approximate only.

It has rained-stormy- and looks like more during the night. Unless the weeds have spinning up in the morning, I shall carry on now in the house for a day or two.

I think it wise to pack what I can carry as n°1 necessities. Pack again something bigger for n°2 necessities and pack gain n° 3 and 4. Also to make a list of any furniture, which I may be able to take if we have to leave the village with the whole population. If I have to leave by myself and Mme P. does not care to stay here, I may either hand our cottage to the Alloys or else take some furniture (if possible) and distribute the rest round the village for safe keeping and so leave the house empty. It needs a lot of careful thinking out.

The Germans as thanks for the use of the kitchen stove, no doubt, brought in an old railway sleeper and some other wood today, so the food problem is easier. I'm afraid Gisele's stock of "Marie-Claire" are destined to be burnt however, eventually.

Put another truss of straw to protect our trench entrance this morning; dug up a cabbage to make room and had cabbage and leek soup and potatoes, peas and a little lard for lunch, also some strawberries and milk. I am becoming a big milk drinker. I have a whisky at night, but shall not feel the lack of it when all has gone. It is better to have empty bottles than full ones in the house these days- one never knows what is coming and we might easily get a hard drinking crowd of soldiers some day. I doubt it though; they seem to be too well self-disciplined for that. I have invented a new aperitif-tisane de menthe: Mme P., instead of taking fresh leaves, took a packet. It was tasteless though yellow in colour, she added more, still no taste. So I looked at her packet and found it was marked "mauve"! Now I have the real stuff and it is quite good, cold.

June 27th

Day spent in the house-diarrhoea this morning- perhaps too much mint- so I shall leave it alone today. By the way, I no longer take Kruschen.

Mr Boutroy dropped in for a chat this morning and told me the peace news. Apparently, Germany is to occupy France, roughly on a line from Belfort to Nantes and also the Atlantic coast to Spain and to withdraw partly at least, when peace is finally signed. At present, it is an armistice.

Still, it is not to be supposed that the Germans will abandon the coast facing England and so the chances of getting across to England to rejoin my wife and boys are still very remote. Mr Boutroy has had to give a list of the refugees here, so Mme P. is of course one; she is going to Calais tomorrow.

June 28th

Mme P. is away to Calais. I stay in house sorting things out and making lists up. I cannot very well garden as the Germans are in and out all the time. An uneventful day.

I got a paper- the first number of the Petit Calaisien since May- and found that householders on the Quai de l'Escaut can go and visit their houses this next Sunday 30th. So Mme P. has not come back and will no doubt return on Monday after spending the day at her house on Sunday. She will be fagged out on Sunday. Meanwhile I am out of tobacco by tomorrow noon, hope she brings a packet back, plus some flypaper. Have melted jam jelly and mixed with sugar and water, today tried it in Mme Roussel's fly trap, but my total bog is 4 only so far. Mme Ventrôme came in this evening and will bring my milk tomorrow morning.

June 29th

Another house day. But my haricots planted on 22nd are showing through. Picked a few strawberries for dessert for dinner tonight, squash and mixed with milk and sugar, after new potatoes boiled with a mint leaf, peas and a soup: not too bad a dish, I also threw two fried eggs with four spring onions in short bits.

I have a Voltigeur tonight, from Mr Boutroy. There can be no question of handing the house over to the Alloys: he is starting work again at the Chamber of Commerce and they are moving to live near Fort-Nieulay with friends, tomorrow. I understand that a notice posted at the Mairie invites all refugees to return to their houses. This can hardly affect Mme P. who is inscribed here since last September and who has no home (habitable) left.

I have decided that, even if I leave Escalles, I will still stay in this region of France and the point is that I am known here and can find people to vouch for me and to help me if necessary. But if I leave here and Mme P. leaves also, then what on earth can I do with the furniture and our affairs? If left here, it will be sacked and ruined. Finances will not allow me to take another cottage elsewhere in the country-I know of one. And if I did so, I might have to face an internment camp soon after getting installed.

Mme P. is scared of any gunfire, personally I do not think that England will do anything except stand on the defensive at home and occasional bombing will avoid the village certainly. So that probably Escalles will be peaceful and safe, more as it is no spot to attempt a landing, I imagine.

I shall go and see Dutnall again next week and find out what room he has available at Brêmes-les-Ardres, it is outside Ardres, on the main road to Guînes and there is probably a certain amount of timber available in the neighbourhood for burning in the winter. Heating there will certainly be less of a problem than here. As I imagined, the Germans, by inserting articles in the press, etc. are striving hard to set French opinion against England. It is too early to say what

effect they will have, but these Germans have studied psychology of the human race very carefully indeed and they know what they are about.

I have one more whisky left for tomorrow night. I am inclined to keep that bottle of grog for the winter-Maurice found it when we tidied up the cellar.

I can not believe that the war will be over before the winter- England will fight hard and I think it will be a long struggle, going against England for some time to come. If England loses, then we all become slaves to a political alternative until another war cleans matters up again! And so will Europe go on.

June 30th, Sunday

Today's paper says that Russia has now entered Romania. Smash and grab gangster law, as usual. We see nothing else days-the rule of force and that is all there is to it.

Mme Vendrôme brought me in 3 salads with the milk-most welcome as ours are poor and small-in fact very few left. She stayed to talk for a bit whilst Denise wriggled about on every chair of the room. Opened a small cassoulet for lunch and have left half for Mme P., who may be back tonight and will be hungry. More new potatoes, with mint and butter and the salad-it all made a good lunch. I learn that the Austin family are now living with Sticks at Folle Emprise, have not seen them yet.

Newspaper is hardly interesting. One realises that all the communiqués and articles attributed to Pétain, etc. are mostly lies. At the same time, as I have often said, the Germans realise that 80% of the world population will believe anything it sees in print and they bank on this. The best thing to do is simply ignore the news entirely and to hope optimistically for some redressement of the present situation. If the Germans give us "news", it will only be given because they think it good for us to learn it and so, probably it will be false news simply designed to undermine the French moral. One will only be able to believe news given to us when we have concrete proof of its truth and that is not likely to be the case. The best thing is simply to keep one's mind a blank.

Two of the men here and at least two others outside seem to have blood trouble: terribly inflamed fingers (panari, I think, is the word) and gumboils. Possibly due to the fact that they are not eating green vegetables but chiefly canned meat, fish or else fresh eggs. They don't go to the doctor for these things-just slit them open with knife or scissors. They are certainly tough! For I know well how a panari can hurt.

Have turned to gardening again, have put in some cornichons in the bed by the pear tree wall, also have weeded that path.

I don't expect Mme P. till tomorrow. She will certainly need all today at the Quai de l'Escaut and will be too tired to return here, it is a long walk for her. Friday, she got a sit to Calais on a farm cart. By the way, I find that we can use the coast as far as Sangatte, but not between there and Calais.

I think that the Germans here have changed over from night duty to day duty. So, probably, they will be in later on (it is now 7pm), wanting to cook their meal and make coffee.

I have had to help these men with bad fingers- I just could not stand by and do nothing, so gave them hot fermentation and metavaccin. That, I suppose, is humanity and I have the definite

feeling that these men, feeling perhaps grateful for trouble taken, would, if ordered to hate me, just hate me without question!

July 1st

Mme P. still not back at 9pm-she only has another hour, as no one can be out after 10pm. Have been in garden most of afternoon, weeding, as usual. I planted some cornichons yesterday.

Mme V. got a note from her husband this morning at Pihen-he was passing through to Lille as a prisoner of war and handed the note to a railway employee. So now, she has definite news and no longer uncertainty.

I have never yet come across men of any nationality who have such bad manners as the Germans we have seen. They never dream of knocking at a door. One man today, who is billeted elsewhere and was apparently visiting his pals here, just opened the front door to get shelter to light his pipe, puffed into the room and shut the door again. I was in the kitchen and had no time to do anything except come and lock the door against him.

I am sleeping better as the Germans are out all night still. They came back at 6am today but have just left again, apparently on duty. No tobacco and no whisky today. I am down to milk and mint.

July 2nd

A day again by myself-weeded the Princess haricots and that path and had an aching back! In the afternoon, Mr Deguines came in to see me and we had a chat. In the absence of anything else, he really did appreciate my mint extract and he left me three cigarettes. I learn that Maurice's stamp collection is safe and am very happy about that. Later, the lady who lives at the bungalow came in to see Mme P. -she thought I was Mr P., so I learn. Then came Mme Roussel with half a bottle of vermouth-I fear very much that she had swallowed the first half before coming. Leaving, she came a purler at the foot of the steps, it is a pity to see it. Finally, I decided to wait till 8.30pm and to keep Mme P.'s share of cassoulet. She arrived about 8.15 just fagged out. However a sip of vermouth, the cassoulet and salad served by me as cook and waiter and a final glass of couventine put her quite on her feet again. She is much happier now that she has dealt with her house and furniture and much more settled in every ways. Most of her staff is damaged, but I think she has dared quite a lot. Our house is a heap of bricks, with the bathroom in the dinning room. Deguines'house also-it burnt but he saved wine and coal. Mme P. tried to find me some tobacco, but the shops would not serve a woman-probably thinking that had a husband also buying elsewhere. One way or another, a cheerful evening and followed by a quiet night.

July 3rd

Left Mme P. in bed and got the fire started, but she was soon up and about. Dug up another cabbage and we had cabbage soup-very good- and our usual peas, carrots and potatoes with two tiny bits of lard which remained for lunch; finished up with milk and the white currants- there we have quality if not quantity for they are very big and juicy. Scratched up the remains of the rhubarb to make jam. Mean while, Mme V. bought me some salads to eat and some scaroles to reset. So, I finished off the first three rows of peas, forked over and hoed it all and then replanted two rows of 35 scarole salads. A good day work. Also I have brought down the bike, got it ready and pumped up and generally in order. Emile came in and gave me two pipes of tobacco and promised me a pack for tomorrow. I think I shall have two luggage carriers fore and aft fixed to the bike so as to be able to carry parcels and bags easily. Bikes have to be very carefully guarded as there is a lot of thieves-so when visits are made, the bike is always taken right inside the house, other people deflate the back tyre, take away the pump or remove the chain! Nice pleasant rain in the early morning and I hope for more tonight-one's point of view changes with one's position, now I look on rain as a God send for the garden and for the ultimate food it will produce later on. Apples are plentiful, but pears are poor; the pears did not do well - probably though lack of hoeing. One has to make the greatest economies; I got through 3 1/2 days on one bucket of coal, by a wise use of wood and paper; now all garden cuttings are collected too, for ultimate burning.

Eggs are now one Franc each: the Germans eat quantities; one man here had 8 at one meal two days ago. Even the pea plants are now put out to dry, for ultimate burning! And I have done the same with the twigs of the currant bushes.

July 4th

Another gardening day, weeding paths and anxiously watering the romaine and scarole salads; I think they will now come through-at any rate 3/4 of them. I have a very aching back and my knees are a bit sore. Have decided to let all hedges grow and to cut them in October to dry and use for fire.

The Germans were out all night and so we had a really good and quiet night's rest. They certainly work hard, very long hours, but always seem cheerful, so it is evident that they are good soldiers. The one with the bad panari is now almost cured- I shall soon have a reputation as a doctor.

In the Reader's Digest of April there was a short article about the English-German phrase book which is issued to German soldiers and this article stated that there were phrases such as "Tell me the number of the division which has just left, tell me the truth or you will be killed". One of the Germans showed me yesterday his French-German phrase book; I looked through it very carefully but found absolutely nothing of that kind. The Digest is probably right as regards the English-German phrase book, at all events it does not exist in the French-German book or at least, not in the one I saw.

July 5th

I had intended biking to Calais this morning but it is raining pretty heavily, so I have put it off. Meanwhile, the garden is profiting and I am most pleased about it. As it is wet, I shall make out Mme P.'s furniture list so that if ever war damages are accorded, she will have a complete list in order. Emile has brought me another packet of tobacco.

Mme P. has invited some of her friends to lunch on Sunday next. Chicken is not easily found as the egg season is over and eggs are sold at a Franc each. So possibly, I shall get to Calais tomorrow visit the butcher and so get our teeth into a nice bit of meat for a change. I could just tackle a steak at the "Lord Belgrave", near the AA office in London.

By the way, we have heard that Vic, the dog, has been seen at Wissant with the Germans.

I am afraid that my diary must be rather boring to read, but life is made up now of events of so little importance. I only hope that Gisele and the boys will also keep some kind of record so that if we all come together again, I may be able to read theirs and so pick up the threads of their lives once more and realise too what they have gone through. I have no accurate information, but everything points to Gisele having made the crossing safely. Nothing accurate, I say, because no one can say on what ship she crossed or what happened to it. But I feel, and have always felt, that she is safe. No doubt she has taken at least Denis from school unless his school has moved elsewhere and possibly she has spent some time with Auntie Jenny-I seem to have an idea of her arriving there with Binkie and rather in a state of collapse, with Auntie in her quiet way, just saying: "You are Arthur's wife, I'm sure", getting her soothed and getting my cousin Maurice, the doctor, to come and see her and look after her. Is it all imagination or is it real? Perhaps by now she has moved elsewhere to the West Country and taken Maurice too, for greater safety. All this must have been a very big nerve strain and a big strain on her heart too-it is none too strong.

I thank God for Escalles, even under the German occupation. Here at least, she and the boys' things surround me and it is home. And I have a few books, carefully chosen when we cleaned out Calais' house, the boys' books too. So far, I have read little, days have been busy and at night we have no light, so go to bed at 10pm (German time corresponding to 9pm French summer time) and get up about 8am. Lonely as is this life, still with all these home and family things around me, it is bearable, though I don't know for how long. At least, I am better here than if I was staying in someone else's home, however good the people might be and however comfortable it was.

July 6th - Saturday

A bad night sleeps. I tried to send my thoughts through as usual. Then it seemed that Maurice answered me and told me that Mummy was very ill. I told him again that I was safe and well and that he must tell her that he had heard again, at once. Then it seemed that I knew that such knowledge would cure her anxiety and give her peaceful sleep, which would save her. And I told her again and put my rough bearded cheek against her soft one and so stayed until I felt that she was breathing peacefully once more. Then the nightmares, one after the other. How much of all this is imagination? Perhaps I shall live to know one day.

I went on the bike to Calais after calling in on friends at Fréthun. Had lunch with Dutty-he insisted on lending me 2 000Fr and this debt has to be paid one day; he also gave me two packets

of tobacco and some sugar and I bought some veal for Sunday. Left Calais in heavy rain with no coat and was soaked through when I got home, but changed at once and so took no harm.

July 7th - Sunday

Mme P.'s friends, Mr and Mme Grare and their boy came to lunch and generally it has been a lazy day, except for our teeth, which we were glad to bite some butcher's meat with! My salads planted on June 22nd and 24th have not yet come up, so I dug over again and sowed four more lines again.

This afternoon, one of the Germans came in to show us that the electric light has been restored. Later, another came in to ask if we had a T.S.F. Then we put it on the wicker wood basket and opened the window and they all sat about outside to listen. On the whole, a pleasant day relieved by company of these people. I am to lunch with them in Calais next Saturday.

Dutty says that half of what he has, whatever it is, is mine if I need it and I say the same to him. We hope to stick together if it ever comes to an internment camp.

I know learn that the Sharps left on a boat Wednesday 23rd, but whether they are safe or not, I don't know. I also learn that Bobby Edwards was not killed at Les Attaques. There are so many rumours that one does not know what to believe.

I think that we shall be allowed to keep the T.S.F., but that we shall always be limited to listening German stations.

I have today made up a carnet of 10 cheques on white paper and shall give one to Dutty for his loan, although it may be a very long time before he can cash it. Even those, who have banking a/c in Calais, can hardly get any money-500Fr a week is the maximum I believe. Gisele will be glad to know that I am using the first knitted pullover she made for me-very useful in evenings sitting near the open door.

July 8th

This morning, a German radiographiste came round. He spoke French perfectly - so perfectly in fact that he asked me if I was English, as I pronounced my R's like an Englishman! Later on, one of our Germans here asked me what was my nationality and seemed most surprised to learn that I was English: no doubt he has been taught that all Englishmen are unkind and nasty people! Well, they all left this afternoon, telling me that England will be utterly defeated in the next four days. We had about 1 1/2 hour free to clear up a bit and then another lot came in. They are very different to the last ones-do not seem so quick to settle down and were apparently very disgruntled that we could not produce a utensil of about 5 litres or so for coffee for ten men. The others used a big enamel jug and were quite happy about it. The T.S.F. I could see, was going to cause difficulties: all the Germans were at our window, continually turning all the knobs and making the whole set simply roar. So I have decided to cut it out and before the next lot of Germans come in, I took out 4 lamps and have stored the set for the moment in the bedroom. Later, I may deposit it with the Maire, as has been done in Calais.

I have put the boys' boat in the big attic, over the little bedroom-it will catch any roof leak there. Also, I have put in some chairs (3 dinning-room chairs broken or in a bad way-the Germans' doing) and the Elsane, also as a rain trap.

Tom's girl came in this afternoon, bringing news from a Mr Brouard, who I believe is employed at the Gare Maritime according to him. All the French boats, which left Calais and Boulogne on the 22nd, got safely across to England and then back to St Malo or Nantes. His son was on one of them and got the message carried through to his father, I think.

It seems to take me 3-4 hours to get to sleep at night-I imagine that it is the lack of brain exercise more than anything else though I seem too to be getting a certain amount of indigestion. Some day, I must weigh myself: my grey suit, made in Woods in Folkestone, just floats on me and the jacket could almost be double breasted now. Still, it always was a very slack fit.

I heard heavy firing and bombing yesterday-it seemed to me to come from the Channel in the direction of Dungeness. Today apparently bombing in the direction of Boulogne. There are rumours of an English landing and good progress in Holland, but I take little notice of such rumours-very often they are untrue and when eventually denied, the disappointment is greater. I should not be surprised if such rumours are not set on foot deliberately, in order to create such disappointment.

Old Tom, after a period of complete despondency and of fear for his life, is apparently picking up again. He will probably come down and see me next week. There are no Germans at Tape-Cul. The Austins are at Folle Emprise, but I think will open their epicerie again soon.

Mme V. sent us some nice salads today by Denise. I remembered to buy her some sweets in Calais on Saturday. She also bought us some meat at Wissant, having sent her pigs for slaughter this morning.

July 9th

This morning's Petit Calaisien says that the acting maire of Calais (Gerschel), the secretary to the Mairie (Verschoore) and Mr Loez have been arrested and set to Lille as hostages: this as a warning to the population not to cut out German telephone wires. If wires are cut then these hostages may be shot. Others have been taken from other towns in the Nord and Pas-de-Calais. One trembles for them, for children even can cause their death and the cutting of wires is silly for it can only cause a very temporary inconvenience to the Germans. One does not like to feel that innocent human lives can be taken as reprisals for such acts.

I biked over to see some friends at Fréthun and ate black currants in their very wild and unkept garden. We can have some if we want for jam making. Also I can take wood for fire from this plantation, nice people, full of kindness. Returned home about 8.30pm for a light meal. Now, one of the Germans who left yesterday has returned again this evening. The new ones have not troubled us at all. Much German air activity and someone counted some 40 planes, bombers, making for England this afternoon.

Planted more cerfeuil this morning, as the first (planted June 24th) has not come up at all. Carrots are just showing through, so must now plant some more.

Last night was the best night's sleep I have had for some time. Tonight I sleep in a vest only, for Mme P. has washed my one and only pair of pyjamas today. I am also getting a change of sheets and pillowslips - we are short as so much has been lost. So it is going to be a night of luxury.

July 10th

All day in the garden. I weeded a plot of haricots planted by Mr Deguines and Mr Perrin, but they planted them too close so I cannot use the hoe and had to do everything by hand with the small fork-a backbreaking job. Then I started to dig up the strawberry bed-will Gisele ever forgive me? I think she will for the ground is wanted for something more solid to eat this winter.

For this lot of Germans we lock the front door so that they have to come round to the kitchen door instead and so we get more privacy and the place is cleaner.

This afternoon, at least 42 bombers passed on towards England. There may have been even more for I counted 86 in all, but think some of them circled round, wasting time on purpose whilst the leading flights did their job. Still I heard no bombing or, apparently, gunfire. But, judging by the return, when several flights were reduced to one or two planes, they must have lost at least 10. At Duterbois farm, in the lane going to the sea, they can see across to the English coast and the old lady says that, so far as she could see, the Germans never reached England at all. Perhaps they were caught badly by the English fighters, even though they were very strongly protected by their own fighters.

It seems to me that these last two days are a prelude to a big attack-the usual system of trying to annihilate the defences before putting the troops into the final attack. I do not think that that system will be as practical with water in between the two sides, as it has been in land attacks.

The German communiqués are as usual-they hit all their military objectives and lose two machines, whilst the English bomb civilians, etc., kill women and children and lose 10 machines. They are certainly a credulous people.

Mme P. has made gelée de groseilles today-we have both worked hard and earned our meal. She is getting more black currants tomorrow in the village.

Although the Germans turn out wonderfully well as soldiers, with uniforms and accoutrements in perfect order, they are just incredibly dirty in the WC and when they leave a billet, they leave it dirty and untidy-totally different to French or English troops. Of manners, they appear to have none. They open a door as if they are trying to shake the house and they close it as if they were trying to bring the house down. "Please" and "Thank you" are apparently not part of their vocabulary. Their character is quite definitely a destructive one and they appear to reap a childish pleasure in ruining all kinds of things: a child picks up a toy, tires of it, throws it away and breaks it. The Germans are the same-they have never grown up or grown out this habit.

July 11th

Today I went to Calais on the bike as usual, via Peuplingues. I showed my carte d'identité as usual, at Haut-Escalles, but later on was stopped again near the calvaire. A German officer, who spoke passable French, wanted to know how long I had lived at Escalles, how long in France and so on. He wanted me to return with his men to the Mairie at Escalles to control my statement a bit. However, I showed him also my driving license dated June 1919, my carte de commerçant and my carte for free access to the Gare Maritime given by the Commissaire Spécial and satisfied him. So I was able to go on my way and so avoid climbing the Peuplingues hill again. So today I have added to my papers the feuilles d'immatriculation to the Tribunaux de Commerce of Amiens (1921) and Boulogne (1929). My feuille de première immatriculation, given at Amiens in 1919 has been lost with my other papers. In any case, 1921 should be far enough back. So these many French papers, which always seemed so troublesome, are now proving useful.

I lunch with the Deguines, who are living now with Mme Lariviere. Claude has been ill a month ago with a mucous fever, though temperature has never been more than 38°5. It is apparently a very mild form of typhoid and they think it probably had its origin in well water at Boulogne, during its taking and occupation when, no doubt, town water was cut off.

Later in the afternoon I saw Dutty, who is rather dispirited generally. He would much like to be with me and has an idea of buying a small farm near St Tricat to run a big vegetable garden, rabbits and fowls and so to assure food supplies other than butcher's meat, milk, bread, sugar, coffee, etc...

One hears rumours of tracts promising an early deliverance of the North of France, but one never sees these tracts and does not know what to believe. I distrust such news for I do not think England is strong enough to attack and that she must stick to the defensive for some time to come. After all, England has 45 millions population against Germany 85 millions.

There are also rumours as regards the German morale being low. The 10 Germans who left last Monday had a very good morale indeed. The new ones, who seem to be older men, certainly have not the same general gaiety of the others.

Still more rumours of English parachutists. This may be more possibly true and be the cause of the keener investigation of cartes d'identité.

July 12th

Mr le maire has obtained some coal dust from the cimenterie and our share has been two sacks, which came in this morning. We could have had three sacks perhaps, as the villagers were not keen on the dust. We shall mix it with the cinders and damp it and it will keep a fire going alright that way and won't fall through the grid.

A quiet day here. I have gardened all day and have finished the strawberry patch. Aching back and knees, but I am getting hardened to this. Have also earthed up the haricots: we shall be eating them very soon-the small ones.

Mr Deguines told me yesterday that if I got stuck for money, he would be able-probably-to help me to a small extent. All these people are very good. I have little doubt also that Mr Peron, Noel or Romain would help me out too if necessary. I have not seen Noël yet and do not know if he has news of his son-he is probably in England as he was interpreter in some English division, I believe.

Am now trying to get hold of some winter cabbages to "repiquer". I fear that food of all sorts will be very short indeed. The Germans are living on the country: I believe they have 2 Marks, equivalent to 40Fr, per day, so they can do themselves well. Also probably, French food supplies are being sent to Germany and France, with no shipping now available, cannot import anything.

I think that Mme P. would like to keep rabbits, but the suggestion must come from her as the question of their keep and green staff will probably be troublesome.

I must get a day in Calais soon, with more time to myself, for my beard needs a barber's touch. All the same, it has not yet reached the stage when I have to decide whether I will sleep with it under or over the sheet! With bare arms and the anchor tattoo on the left one, I look very like the sailor man on Players cigarettes...

Rumours again, which appear to have some foundation, that many Germans are now refugees in Belgium to escape the danger of English bombing, which apparently is partly heavy. I

see in the paper that the Germans claim to have bombed Falmouth: so that even Cornwall is suffering. It has been my idea that Gisele is now somewhere in that direction. Even so, if she has kept to the country and away from aerodromes and other military objectives, I think she is safer than in the north. For if the Germans succeeded in a landing in the north, they could quickly establish their line right across northern England, near the Scottish border and cutting off England from Scotland, they could then use Scotland as a base prior to an advance southwards. Even so, this presents some difficulties, as the Norwegian ports, in winter, would be rather hazardous. Anyway, I am no strategist, so all this is pure guesswork.

Perhaps Gisele has even followed out one of my original ideas and has taken the boys to Canada. There she would be safe, but I fear that she will remain close by, somewhere in England, so as not to be too far away if I am able eventually to get to England after the war. In times like these, once a family is separated, it were better if each branch of it simply set out to assure its own safety, leaving other branches to their fate but with the hope of ultimate complete reunion alive: for they have no other alternative and the best thing is to keep one's life intact if possible, with a view to that reunion and then being able to be useful once more, when reunited, to the others. I, here, can do little else: in fact, I am powerless and like all the population of France, am virtually a prisoner. If I knew that Gisele and the boys were in Canada I should be a more happy man. But I am afraid that they care too much and are too loyal to me to go so far away. Well, God bless them and may He keep them safe and well.

July 13th

I should have gone to Calais to lunch with the Grave family, but it rained hard until noon, so I stayed here, having already arranged with them that I would not go if it rained.

Instead I have gardened-as usual. I have re-set 34 of Maurice's lines of lettuces-part near the peas and the others in the alley, in front of the kitchen window, under the apple trees. Have taken up the 4 strawberry plants, which were there. In addition, I have re-set 30 winter cabbages, which we obtained from Mme Vendrôme's father. Part on the old strawberry bed (16) and the rest dotted round in odd places, principally near the flageolet haricots. Have also hoed all salad and onion beds and have earthed up the potatoes a bit and have done odd bits of weeding into the bargain. Plenty of work, but it makes the day go quicker and even the organisation work, small as it is, of thinking out the best way to use every square metre of soil, with a view to ensuring a certain food supply, gives me a small amount of mental exercise. So I study catalogues and gardening books in what spare time I have-which is really much.

The day begins by getting the fire going at about 8.30 and breakfast-lait au café instead of café au lait, which means a big cup of milk (hot) with a little coffee in to give a taste to it and two slices of bread and butter with jam. Then I generally chop up a basket full of small wood for the kitchen. Then gardening till about 1pm or so. Lunch is always soup of some kind or other, very often a small bit (3sq inches) of lard with potatoes, peas, carrots and onions and then the currants squashed up with sugar and milk, the whole washed down with a cup of milk and a cup of coffee. Very often a cup of milk and a slice of bread in the afternoon, and dinner is generally soup, two eggs with fried onions, currants and milk again.

Alright so far, but we finish the currants tonight and coffee and sugar will run out in due course, as also jam. Still, we shall get through and the peasant diet of soup au lard will do us no harm when we finally have to adopt it.

I give a hand at washing-up always, and one way or the other, Mme P. and I are setting down to life partly well together.

The winter, with absence of gardening pursuits and short days, will be very hard: I propose to leave over to then any heavy wood cutting, house repairs and decoration work. With the coal problem probably difficult, we may have to consider buying a small kitchen stove for the dining room, doing our cooking here on it, and also perhaps living, for sleeping purposes, in just the 2 rooms. But that would have the disadvantage of putting the small room out of action and it might be taken for billeting purposes. I rather wonder what the Germans will do as regards heating if they take the end room this winter too: they may build a chimney-if so then we must get every stick of wood or grain of coal dust into our part of the house- otherwise they would pinch the lot and say: "C'est la guerre, Madame." That is their way.

The front garden is abandoned: roses there are superb and Binkie's lin is a good show in spite of the Germans, who seem to take pleasure in treading on anything nice and who throw their dirty water and plate scraps anywhere. The present lot are a little cleaner than the others-they are older men and perhaps that is why. Even so, I have not yet seen a German who can be considered as "house trained". Those of them, who marry later in Germany, will have a lot to learn and those, who are already married, will soon get called over the coals if they act in the same way at home as they do in France. They will probably excuse themselves by saying that they have adopted French manners, which will cash a very unjust aspersion on France. It is really unpleasant to me to see this little place, usually so gay and tidy, made in part like a pig sty-filthy WC paper and refuse thrown anywhere, although there is a big central poubelle just outside the café next door and so on. Well, we must just bear it.

Mme P. is glad that I have not gone out-it gives her an opportunity to go and gossip, principally with Mme Dutertre. Her gossiping expeditions, I may say, often result in her returning with an egg, some milk or a small piece of lard. She is a great scrounger and the war has probably accentuated this side of her character too! And she seems to juggle with our bread ration like a stockbroker juggles with shares!

I seem to talk about the coming winter as if it was certain still to be wartime. God knows, I await its ending as impatiently as any, but I have always felt that the war would be either very short-not more than 18 months- or very long-4 years or more. And it would be folly to remain idle with either perspective in view, with the food problem becoming more difficult daily.

Emile Bergues has just brought me a fine botte of poireaux to re-set. So tomorrow will not be a day of rest-I have 4 lines of potatoes to dig up and put in sacks, then level out the ground again and put in the poireaux. It will be some day and I shall earn my meals!

About 20 German bombers went over to England this afternoon, but I only heard 8 bombs-probably the planes or some of them went further than the coast. Now that the Germans can send their fighter planes over easily to cover their bombers, it must be much more difficult to put up a good defence.

There have been rumours this week of the English having attacked through Holland and of having reached Ostende -some say Ypres. Again, I do not believe it-it is probably a rumour set on foot by the Germans to create hope, which will eventually be disproved and create despondency greater than that which existed before. As I have said before, these people have studied the human psychology in very great detail.

Mme P.'s gossiping expedition produced a basket of gooseberries and some black currants!

I have wondered a lot about how father is getting on. I much fear that, with this critical situation, Kip will have to line up or will not be able to finish his medical studies. If that happens, the consequent anxiety is going to age my father a lot. If the boy does have to go, I hope that he gets into a medical unit. Unfortunately, the war office excels, according to the general opinion, in

trying to fit square pegs into round holes, so he may get thrown into infantry or anything. I cannot quite visualise what Kip is like now and how he will take it- I have not seen him for at least 12 years now, when he was at a prep school in Windermere.

July 14th

The national fête day for France: but of course there is no fête, no flags allowed and no masses can be said for dead soldiers today. It is hot and a glorious day, which reminds me of that great day last September when we had such a grand time in the sea. Now of course, we cannot go to the plage.

It is 3.30pm and I have just finished the poireaux, starting at 9.30am and with an interval for lunch. I found that there were not as many as I thought, so did not have to dig up the potatoes. I have set 108 where the peas were, 42 in the long strip near the refuse corner and 21 at the end of the alley, near the new strawberry bed, where Maurice had replanted some box hedging which has failed. Sown more carrots and radishes last night also. The salads re-set yesterday all look bright, though one has been evidently eaten by a snail. The cabbages look a bit flabby but are pinking all the same.

I have come in for a rest and later shall go over the cabbages with Denis' powder-for there are many butterflies-and shall lay snail traps tonight.

In today's Calais paper, there is a notice saying that all English resident in or de passage in Calais must report at once at the Kommandantur at the Hotel de Ville. This does not seem to apply to me as my domicile is here entirely, but I shall go into Calais tomorrow and find out from Dutty what it is all about.

As far as I can make out, we are living for about 100Fr a week for the two of us:

Bread	18,30	
Butter	21	
Meat	15/20	} roughly 100Fr
Œufs	21	
Sugar, coffee	5/10	

Of course, we have nothing to pay for vegetables such as potatoes, peas, carrots, onions, cabbage, parsley, oseille, cerfeuil, menthe, etc. It just shows how useful a garden can be. And when this war is over, I do hope, somewhere or other, to have a garden, which will feed us all. Agriculture will always pay and it is the safest profession to follow now and probably for many years to come, for the world will take a long time to settle down-if it ever settles down in our family's lifetime. I am probably too old to start anything except, at the most, market gardening, but if Maurice took it up, he would probably do well and if living in a decent country, with congenial society around, he would probably have a good and healthy and happy life. Denis is not cut out for it-he has definite engineering learning's and will probably do well in that line if his education and training for it can be completed.

Mme P. is spending the day making gooseberry jam with her haul of yesterday. We had asked for two pigeons for lunch today, but someone forgot to pass on the order, so we resorted to our usual dish of potatoes, peas, carrots, onions and a small piece of lard. The peas are finished today, but we shall get on to flageolet haricots this week. Then we have the Soissons, which are not as well as last year's. So all is well as it can under present circumstances.

Whilst writing, I have become lazy and now intend to remain lazy for the rest of the day, change my clothes and have a good friction with Eau de Cologne. It will do me good and I feel that my garden work this last week has earned me a short respite.

Later. The above programme has been carried out. I am as clean as a new pin, have a tie on and I smell very nice of that Eau de Cologne.

I am worried about the notice regarding the English at Calais. It may of course just be so that the Germans can find out just who has gone and who has stayed, for the register of foreigners at the Mairie can no longer be accurate. But it looks as if the internment camp- or a concentration camp- is coming in sight. Perhaps, if it does come to that, I shall be able to send news of my whereabouts to Gisele and the boys and assure them of my-probably comparative-safety.

Mme Vendrôme is off to Lille on Tuesday to visit her husband who is a prisoner there. He apparently started out to walk home from Rennes, as a civilian. He got as far as Boulogne but was made prisoner there, being without any *sauf-conduit*. Rather hard luck after that long trip on foot.

A woman, who has been a refugee at Escalles since last September, living at the cottage on the right, a bit further on than Butez's farm, came in this afternoon to make acquaintance with Mme P.; She stayed more than two hours and talked all the time-a hard steely voice, which makes me think of a whole *batterie de cuisine*.

We are a bit troubled with Mme Roussel's hens as the barrier is always open and just now one of Valentine's cows came in to have a look round the garage.

I forget whether I mentioned that the finding of 10 flypapers in the boot-cleaning box has solved the fly nuisance, plus another 10 brought from Calais by Mme P.

A very sad fourteenth of July, as compared with ordinary years.

July 15th

Well, it seems that my turn to be interned will soon come. It appears that Dutnall and 27 others left for Lille this morning from Calais and also that the Gendarmerie called at the Mairie here on Friday to find out what foreigners were living here. I lunched at the house of friends at Fréthun and one way or another picked up 10 packets of tobacco today so that I shall have something to smoke in the early days of the new life, which is coming. I hope that I can go to the same camp as my Calais friends-it is possible that Escalles, coming under Boulogne Gendarmerie, I may be sent elsewhere I have now no doubt at all that internment is coming and pretty quickly.

So this second phase is coming to an end and I propose to stop this diary with its ending and leave it with Mme P., so that it may eventually reach Gisele and the boys. I shall start another at the new camp.

She is very upset about it, I think. Our life together has been pleasant and promised well for the future. She is washing up my clothes for all she is worth now, so as to get me ready. I believe that the old dear has got a soft spot for me: she has been very good and I shall miss her.

Well, she is pretty well set up for vegetables for the garden and I am glad to have been able to do this work for her, however regretful I may be as regards not being able to partake its fruits.

They are taking men from 18 to 60, so old Tom will probably be allowed to stay though Mr Hicks will probably have to go also. It appears that England is doing well against German aircraft and that there now exists some method of pulling them down out of the sky. I believe that

three came down in the sea close to here yesterday/ it pulled down from England, it must be a very potent defensive weapon.

I shall probably not write much more tonight- I am too busy packing necessities, but our one and only remaining bottle of wine-Médoc from the metropole -is going to find a new billet tonight!

What a good thing that Gisele got away in time: had she had to face my going off to internment (for women are not taken), I do not know what she would have done, separated from all. So, thank God she is with our boys.

July 16th

Now 6pm and nothing has yet happened.

I have had a very busy day in attic and cellar, arranging things a bit. The frame of the bike is in the attic, the wheels in the cellar, the pump in the kitchen cupboard and the lighting set on the top shelf in our bedroom. G.'s tea service plus another lot of cups and saucers are in the cellar behind the bottles, on the middle shelf on the left. It is not really much use trying to hide things, for if the Germans come intent on loot, they will soon find everything.

I have not put my nose outside all day-much too busy except for my morning garden tour. Mme P. is now feeling better - I think my news yesterday just brought on her old bile trouble.

I feel rather miserable now I have stopped working to think a bit- it is the idea of leaving here with bare necessities and leaving this little home where I am surrounded by the things we all of us love. I feel that I shall have no link left until the end of the war. I have considered the possibility of trying to get through on the bike to non-occupied France, but have given up the idea, for my money would soon run out and I should be stranded and probably unable to obtain either work or help of any kind. And even if I got through, I should be simply "lost" to my family. In any case, I do not think that I could travel so far without being stopped and turned back. So I shall just await my lot here and accept it when it comes, although the sacrifice of what little liberty remains to us all here is no pleasant prospect. Had thought such a track was possible, I should have made for the Pyrenees and through Spain to Portugal? But without a passport, I should have had difficulties, as there are now-apparently- no British consuls in non-occupied France. One seems to be just hemmed in-perhaps other men, with more guts than I have, have got through. But I had rather relied on my age and my long sojourn in France as being likely, possibly, to keep me free, particularly as on my carte d'identité Gisele and the boys are marked as French.

Well, it is no use regretting now that such an effort was not made-the chances against its success were very nearly 100 to 1, as comparative freedom of movement has not existed for very long. Bikes were pinched at once.

It is a wet day with the Vigneau very foggy. Still the garden profits by it and we have had plenty of rain recently, so everything is thriving.

In normal times, we should be looking forward keenly to the boys' return from their schools and G. and I would be counting the days together. Well, this has been an earthquake in all our lives and in spite of the fact that I was expecting such a war for four years and preparing for it, all these plans seem to have failed. I am worried about the boys' education insurance premiums, which, of course, I cannot pay, as there is no post, nor can the company get in touch with Gisele. She may remember the name of the Legal and General Co, but she knows nothing

about the Sun Life Co or their agents, unless she makes enquiries at King's. And the policies are lost with all my other papers of importance. If I live, all is well, as I have to find the school fees; if I die, then the matter is different, for the Co. pay the sums insured, but the policies lapse if premiums are not paid. Probably, the exceptional circumstances which make it impossible to effect such payments will be taken into account-I hope so.

I expect that G. talks English quite well now-I should love to hear her! Well, she will always have gained that by this experience. I wonder whether she has managed to make contact with John, I hope so- he will do a lot to cheer her, for he will be able to visualise the situation pretty clearly. I only hope that the West family will look after John's effects at his flat, at once, for, with English being cleared out of Calais, his flat is likely to be visited at once, particularly as he was not in Calais to report on Sunday. Over 60, he would have been allowed to stay on, of course.

If only there had been a successful English landing in this past period! I should probably have managed to get back to England somehow or another and would now be with Gisele and the boys. I have counted too much on the possibility and probability of such a landing: but it seemed impossible that England would leave this coast in German hands without an effort.

I am not sorry to have finished with cycling for the German lorry drivers seem to take a fiendish pleasure in trying to just miss-or perhaps to just touch-one. On a main road, riding 18 inches from the kerb, they hurtle past giving one just about another 18ins clearance. On the Peuplingues road, full of holes, they definitely seek these holes when they are full of water and put their wheels through them so as to splash as much as they can and the soldiers, who are being carried, just yell with laughter. So cycling is risky and unpleasant. I am certain that many of their telephone wires have been broken because cyclists have been forced off the road into them. They lay their thin telephone wires in the grass very close to the road edge-perhaps purposely. Their soldiers are furtive looking race and probably, if I had to live for many more months in this attitude of suspicion, I should be unbearable as a person to live with afterwards. For our suspicion is founded on facts and we are and have to be continually on the alert; if we were both out at the same time, it is highly probable that some of them would break in and steal something: hence regular locking of doors and being always with ears cocked up at the slightest noise. I fear that even with a month's such experience, it will take me a long time to lose my door-locking habit, and that I shall be suspicious of everything and everybody for some time to come. It is almost unpleasant prospect and I must try hard and get rid of such an attitude as soon as I am out of the hands or enforced company of these Germans.

July 17th

Now 4.30pm and still no change. Mr Boutroy called in this morning to ask if I had heard anything-he had no news apparently. A rainy day passed indoors, settling oddments. I am going to leave a list of G.4S possible addresses in England with Mr le maire in case he is allowed to send news.

The wireless lamps are hidden behind a tray and are numbered with labels, as are the positions in which they go on the set itself. I think I left the fusible in place, if not, then for the voltage here, it must be inserted parallel to the front face of the set.

The waiting is rather nervy and one would like a decision at once, whatever it may be. I have inserted two cuttings from papers at the end of this, to show the notice as regards we, English civilians and also the other article- I think inspired by the Germans and inserted at their order- to show the stuff, which is doled out, to the French.

I am lazy. It does not seem worthwhile starting anything; my kit to take is pretty well ready or will be when my washing is dry. If no news comes today, I shall probably repack the metal trunk with extra stuff, which I shall want later for the winter, in the hope that Mme P. will be able to send it to me.

July 18th, noon

A notice in the *Petit Calaisien* addressed to English, Poles and Tchecks says that all are to present themselves immediately to the local police authorities individually. It seems to apply to women and children.

Mme P. has just gone to the Mairie to see if I have to do anything- it seems to me that in villages such as Escalles, the Maire represents the police, as he comes under the administration of the Prefecture.

Mme P. cried a bit-she wonders what will happen if she dies and she obviously does not want to live here alone. I have told her just to act for the best and advised her to get someone to live with her if she can do so.

I am leaving here the key of my wooden old tuck box and a few other keys, but only one-that of the little valise "G"- interests Gisele: it is the second key.

Mme P. has returned to me the 500Fr I advanced her for the house. She will pay taxes, also rent I think, but definitely taxes. I have left her a letter to the PTT to stop the telephone. I hope the old dear will be alright. But this is a shock to her and she had got to appreciate, I think, the usefulness of having a man about the house.

Mr le maire vient de venir et me confirme ce que je pensais, qu'il représente ici la police locale: ainsi, il n'y a qu'à attendre. Mes deux valises sont faites en tout cas et mes habits de voyage sont préparés et prêts à mettre.

I don't know why I dropped into French just now!

Our flageolets haricots are really good and we are eating them. My parsley is not coming up-I don't seem to succeed very well with these small seeds. The cornichons, every time they come up, are nibbled by slugs. Even so, Mme P. will have potatoes, flageolets and small haricots Soissons in plenty; carrots, leeks, onions, chicory, romaine, laitue and scarole salads in plenty also; but it will be too much for her to look after the garden and I doubt if she will get help easily.

In case G. has forgotten or mislaid the Boulogne address for Maurice's stamps, this is Mr Evrard, rue Jules Ferry-I think the first turn to the left going up the hill to St Martin. Mr Deguines knows it and also has other papers, which concern G. I have not been able to go there at all, but I understand that there is another valise locked there also.

I think it quite likely that I may get another day or two here now. The Gendarmerie will no doubt come to the Mairie in due course when their lists of foreigners in villages, etc. are complete and have been dealt with by the German Command, who will eventually give orders. Mr Boutroy tells me that Escalles comes under the Gendarmerie of Calais so, quite likely, I shall rejoin our Calais friends. Ratcliffe has gone, also Sarginson with Dutnall, but I do not know the others' names.

6pm now and no further news, so I am evidently going to have another night in Escalles at least, surrounded by all those little things which belong to us all and which make life here bearable.

It may be-though I very much doubt it- that the Mairie can guarantee foreigners in this village. If it is put that way to me, I shall base my decision on whether if I stay here, I shall be able eventually to get news from G. and the boys and send them news myself. If that is possible

from an internment camp only, then I am quite prepared to accept such internment in order to get news and to be able at least to assure them of my safety and try and do something for them. That certainly, rather than live here, for no one knows how long, in complete ignorance of their lives and doings.

I have done little all day, except sit in these surroundings, drinking them all in, so to speak. That way, I shall keep a link between here and myself, and it will help the internment days, which are really prison days, which are in view. I know I shall need all the courage and patience I have got and I fear I have not a great deal of either. In fact, one feels rather like a partridge must feel from August 12th onwards- fair game to be bullied about and shot at. And that is no pleasant feeling or an easy one to digest by someone who has always been his own master and who sees durance-whether vile or not- coming to him apace.

I have taken a pack of playing cards, but have left G.'s two French packs in their case.

There has been very little air activity for some days. England must have a new system of defence, which is making the Germans scratch their heads and think a bit. A machine came down in flames in the sea today, I hear, and there have been others recently too, all seen by the villagers. Probably German, hit and set on fire in the Channel or off the English coast but managing to make a water landing on this side.

It is no use having too much confidence in these new gadgets like the magnetic mine and like all poisons, they have their antidotes. Their value is great if it is going to take a long time to find such antidote and if that time can be used to profit.

I feel that England will win out in the end, though she may be beaten almost to her knees first. The French seem equally confident too and I do not think they pay much heed to the German propaganda against England, representing England as having led France astray.

Mme P. has been out gossiping again-another supply of black currants has hereby matured.

July 19th

Now 2.30pm. Still no news: the newspaper boy has not been this morning.

Mme P. has gone to Calais for the day in a farm cart with the Dutertre. So I have lunched and washed up and am now preparing cassoulet with potatoes and haricots, etc. so that she will have a good meal when she gets in tonight. There has been much air activity for the last hour, but apparently all fighter planes. I heard gunfire from the English side but can see little from here- in fact, almost nothing. I have written a note to Deguines, which Mme P. will take or send down as soon as I have gone. He has G.'s, the boys', Mme Stewart's, Mme Dessaint's, Mme Sexton's and Barclays' addresses. For G., I have given her bank's, the AA's, Auntie Jenny's, Hannah's and my father's addresses, so if a letter ever does get through, it should reach her through one of these sources. It will be a simple postcard just saying that I have gone to a civilian internment camp.

We seem to be getting rain daily now and also sometimes nightly. I hope my walking stick is preserved after I left. It will be a souvenir: I shall tell Mme P. about it and probably store it away in the attic somewhere.

Those bush roses between the currant bushes just smell wonderful today. I have neglected these, as indeed all flowers, in order to have vegetables, but they seem to do as well without me! The lilac suckers are worse than ever this year. The front garden will certainly have to be renewed. The Germans, with their numbers and their treading about in heavy boots, send a lot of gravel into the front beds. The border is all trodden down and the earth generally has been

trodden hard. The path is getting covered in places with that nasty grass (chiendent, I think). The steps, which Binkie and I cemented have so far stood up to the strain of many men in heavy boots- I am rather proud of our work there as masons.

By the way, we light the stove very easily now at the very first go, using straw: it never needs more than one match, but Mme P. hates that stove just as much as G.

Now 6pm. Terrific air activity all afternoon but particularly during the last hour. Cannot count the planes-all fighters- it would be as easy to count flies buzzing round in the kitchen. Heard some machinegun fire and saw a parachute dropping, seaward direction, near the Cran d'Escalles apparently. I cannot make out whether it is attack or defence, but I have seen no English planes.

July 20th

Mme P. only got 1 1/2 hour in Calais and then had to wait over two hours for her farmer to turn up to drive her back. So she got nothing done at all.

Now 4pm and still no news and nothing new in the paper either. It appears that Mr Boutroy, the maire, simply fell down dead very suddenly near Austin's café this morning: it may of course be a stroke only and I do hope so, for I liked the old man very much and he has been full of small kindnesses to me. I shall definitely learn tonight. His son, Fernand, in the army and not home yet.

Today I have done something to please G. -I have given two coats of Darkaline to the shelves in the chimneypiece. It looked much better, but I think will require another coat if it is to really shine like varnish. In this last week, doing nothing in the garden, I have read a bit-the boys' books by Curwood, principally "Nomades du Nord". When I go, I think I will take "Lorna Doone" with me.

This afternoon, I tackled by beard. I think I have spent 1 1/2 hour on the job, but I have taken a lot off, look much less hairy on the throat and, one way or another, I seem to have managed to make a pretty uniform cut. My hair needs cutting, but that I cannot tackle at all-I could probably manage the front, but the back would beat me.

Apparently the air activity yesterday was directed towards Wissant - I suppose English planes came over, but I heard no bombing.

5pm. A bombing raid-apparently on Dover, has taken place within the last 1/2 hour: I don't know how many bombers went on, but judging by the way some fighters have come back, they have lost 5-6 machines out of 18. I can still hear bombing and firing so am going to watch the next lot come back and make another count. Heard more bombing-one machine down in flames in the Peuplingues direction; and saw a little white painted hydravion with red cross on it going seawards. English over Wissant or Boulogne, I think. But it is difficult to tell.

Tomorrow is Maurice's birthday. My diary then, will take the form of a letter to him.

Mr Boutroy is dead; it was not a stroke. Mme Vendrôme is back from seeing her husband at Lille but I have not seen her yet. Denise will probably pop in to say bonjour tomorrow.

July 21st

My dear sonny,

Today you are fifteen. For some years now, due to schooling, you have not spent your birthday at home, but we were able always during those years to count on seeing you within a week or ten days: now it is different, for me at least. I wish you many happy returns of your birthday and, above all, that there will be happier returns than the one today.

You are really older, in thought, than your actual age. I am now glad of it, for in this terrible period of trial, with your mother inexperienced of England and with the handicap of language against her and with Binkie still rather young and skittish, I feel that a very great load of responsibility must have fallen on your young shoulders. It is too much responsibility for a youngster but I know that you are level headed and that you have the pluck and courage to carry it. If you make mistake of judgement, do not blame yourself for them: learn by them simply to avoid similar mistakes in future. You will have done your best in any case and no one can do more than that. Anybody can be very wise after the event. All this I say to you almost every night when I lie in bed, concentrate my thoughts on each of you in turn, in the hope that those thoughts may reach you, so that you feel that I am really talking to you.

The pity is that all this falls on you when you should whilst obtaining your learning and education, be enjoying your games and life generally, to the full, at school and at home. It will make you even more older than your years than is the case now. And, although that will stand you in good stead when you begin to earn your living in some way, it will, in the meantime, make you more inclined to be with boys and men actually older than yourself. That is not quite so good, perhaps: strive against it a bit and let your own natural sunny nature come out and win the day for you. I think the last war did something similar to me. But for me it was accentuated by the fact that, when I was 30 or so, I was watching the new generation of 18 or so growing up-long haired, effeminate, undisciplined and unable to amuse itself by any hobby but, instead, paying for its amusements always. And they even expected daily paid amusement as a right rather than a privilege, to be arranged at the morning breakfast table. That spirit has brought France where she is today; it may bring England there. I do not think so, as I understand English character pretty well and feel that England as a complete whole has her teeth set and will affront her danger with grit and courage and eventually make good.

You have always had a hobby - your stamps. And it is for that reason that I am so glad that they were saved- and so far are still safe, I think - before anything else. I hope they eventually return to you intact. But, whether you carry on with stamps or not, do keep some hobby or hobbies- the more, the better - going all through your life.

I hope that by now your mother has been able to create a home of some kind for the three of you. I feel that, naturally, she should reach you both almost in a state of panic and get you both out of your schools for at least what remained of this term, and that thus, you and Binkie were both able to help her with the difficulties which beset her in England at the start. No doubt your schools have moved to safer areas-if such there really are; and possibly, if they are near each other, your mother has managed to find a home fairly close by. Anyway, I like to think of you three, on your birthday today, as being together and as happy as the circumstances of us all permit.

Some day, I hope, We shall all be reunited once more and be 4 instead of 3; but I always have to consider that, although danger exists in England or in parts of it, there is probably still more over here and so I may not get through to that reunion, although I pray for it daily. If I go under, then the responsibility you are shouldering now will be yours for a good many years to come and will increase rather than diminish when this war is over. For economic chaos is likely and monies will no longer have any real value. In fact, all the plans I had been building up for years for your mother and you two boys simply tumble down like a pack of cards. Even so, education, grit and courage will anyone from the bottom to the top of the ladder.

I have tried to do my duty as a father and an Englishman to you all. I have not succeeded perhaps, but it is not through lack of great love, which I have for your mother and our sons.

A happy birthday, again. Your loving

Dad

I see in today's papers that, yesterday, there were neither eggs nor butter on sale in Calais market. Naturally, everything is simply conserved in the country and I think the Germans are sending quantities to their people at home too. Haricots verts are 3Fr la livre-cabbages 1,25 each-potatoes 1,50 le kg-salads 1Fr piece.

These prices just show again the advantage of a garden: our potatoes cost us 14Fr and we get 800-1000 potatoes out of the plants. The remainder are packets of seed of about 2Fr each. Naturally, time spent must not be counted and one must have an inclination to do the work. But when war is over, prices will all rise again and our money will lose its purchasery value. Whilst, for at least 2 years, it will be very difficult to do any business, except for a loss. Consequently, G. and the boys should consider very carefully the possibility of having roughly 100 sq. metres per person- that can keep one person in vegetables all the year round. And also consider very seriously the question of living in the country, somewhere where the communication with a town is an easy matter and where water and electricity are to be found. To a certain extent, it may be distasteful to them, but if I am not there I ask them to consider the practical and financial advantages gained, all of which will help to start off the boys on their careers to a certain extent.

The Germans have gone but another lot came in at once. I saw them eating gooseberries- they had made for our bushes at once, so Mme P. is out collecting the lot. Perhaps the up-bringing of these men does not make them realise that they are acting as common thieves; though I am pretty sure that, if anyone did likewise in their own garden in Germany, they would soon kick up a row.

This long wait is very lowering. So, today, I have done a bit of gardening once more and if nothing happens tomorrow I shall make a new start. Even 6 days neglect tells its story. If anyone can invent plants, which will grow as well and as quickly as weeds, he will make a fortune!

The Germans who have just left- an older lot of men- are the cleanest we have had so far: they turned back their mattresses and brushed out their room and in general made things tidy.

My brown suit, destined for Maurice, is still at the tailors in the rue des Fleurs: I have not been to see about it. Affairs in England are with Barclays'. The Midland (Belgravia branch) and Uncle Richard's pictures at Walter Curtis in Southport. No other affairs in England at all.

July 22nd

Not much news today. I have begun gardening again, getting ready to reset 2 more lines of poireaux. They came in this morning from Mme Dutertre, but they are not as good as those, which Emile gave me.

The new Germans are young and rough. They took 2 mattresses away to another house- Mme P. was wild last night about it and told them off. Then one of them went and opened the electric light counter in the garage: I popped out at once, closed the contact and removed a fuse and told them that it was not to be used.

Mme V. called in to tell us of her visit to her husband at Lille: he will probably be freed soon, as Mr Boutroy gave him a certificate that he could be employed at once.

The bread business is a long one. We get it on Fridays, Mondays and Wednesdays. It is rationed out and distributed at the Mairie and Mme P. has just got ours at 9pm. It will be a very cold and weary business in winter, I'm afraid. I forgot to add yesterday that Mme P. flowered our table with roses in honour of Maurice's birthday.

July 23rd

This morning I reset 100 more poireaux in two rows where potatoes had been. Light rain all afternoon so I have done nothing except sit and chat with Mme P. We lunched late on account of Mr Boutroy's funeral.

Still no news at all for me. I have been living all packed up now for a week, not changing clothes in order to be able to leave with all clean- if we are allowed to take anything with us. Mme V. says that the others, who went from Calais, are at, or near, Loos-les-Lille (not the Loos which is near Lens).

Yesterday, there seemed to be a lot of German motos traffic on the roads; today there is even more. I wonder whether there is anything on.

July 24th

Spent the morning gardening-hoed carrots and weeded them. Then cleared up the long strip from the kitchen to refuse corner and planted 24 more poireaux in it. Also replanted parsley and a little more cerfeuil as neither had done well. Trained kitchen window roses a little.

One of the Germans, I found, had used one of the garden paths as a WC-dirty beast; I wish I had caught him.

Some tracts- supposed to have been thrown by the English - have been picked up at Escalles; I shall have one tonight to look at probably. This afternoon, it is raining again. Mme Nederleaghe (I think that is the spelling) - the old lady from the cottage at the Wissant road corner- came in to have a chat, so time went pretty quickly.

The few past weeks observation of the German shows pretty clearly that the younger men- under 30- have a totally different mentality to those over 30 or so. The older men are more house trained, more polite and quieter. The young men are rude, have brutal gestures and nearly all look as furtive as a burglar setting out to do his job! They lie naturally and do not seem to care at all whether one believes their lies or not- they have no shame at being found out. When peace come, England and France will have to consider this younger class as the Germans of the future- no upbringing, furtive, unthoughtful, brutal and with no idea of the difference between "mine" and "thine". They are essentially fine fighting men, of the trained gangster type. Any

sentimentality as regards the German people as a whole would be cut right out if the statesmen dealing with peace times had ever experienced themselves what the Germans inflict on these country people.

I am certain that they are bleeding France white of food supplies- chocolate, sugar and coffee are leaving in quantity daily. Mme N., in this afternoon, says that farms round Tardingen and Audingen are being evacuated by order of the Germans, no doubt, as they need them for defence purposes. She has her daughter and her grand children with her (5 or over) so they have no Germans in their cottage at all. She appears to have plenty of fighting spirit- it was quite a pleasure to hear her talk. I warn all these people about believing in tracts- always for the same reason- that they may be distributed by the Germans to raise hope, which will later be confounded, and result in greater despair. I am certain that it is wise to bear this always in mind.

I have now seen the tract and it appears to me to be genuine, nothing much in it except words of encouragement to the French.

I have fattened a bit in the last 10 days, probably because I got no exercise for a week: so I shall go on gardening. If only these hills and cliffs were clear and we could walk about with the freedom of other days!

Meanwhile expecting a call to internment camp any day, I have not left the cottage at all: it is certainly best to be on the spot when they come. Then, I shall probably be given time to change my clothes and collect some kit, which is packed ready now. It is a bit awkward, as we cannot get any meat or other supplies unless someone we know goes to Wissant or to Calais. However, diet is not of much importance these days, except from the point of view of preserving health. Absence of exercise has brought me back, occasionally, to Kruschen.

I feel very lonely indeed at times and have been getting despondent this last week or so. At night, I do not sleep well but I don't mind that, for the quiet of the nights enables me to lie still and think of G. and the boys. I hope that they are in good courage and as happy as these times can permit.

July 25th

Gardening again: happily so, for I was able to plant 107 poireaux for Mme P. if she is here this winter.

I say happily for news has come. We have to go to Mr Butez's farm at 2pm tomorrow and I have a little doubt that I shall have to leave pretty soon and probably tomorrow afternoon or evening.

The Germans are capable of taking one more room here at once. If such is their idea, I have told Mme P. to get Emile in and get him to replace the door to the little room by masonry. Thus the cottage would become two cottages, each with its own entrance. Much air activity today- England must have a pretty hot time on the coast opposite.

Mme Bourdon has been in and I have given her G.'s possible addresses and also others- Mr Stewart, Mr Dessaint, Mme Sexton and Barclays' at Bordeaux and Lyon. Mr Bower used to be the manager at Lyon and if he gets news of my internment, he may very well communicate with Ash Eton, if he thinks of it.

July 26th

According to the law of the jungle and as I am certainly going to be sent to something in the nature of the jungle, I have washed from nose tip to tail tip and in general have prepared for my going.

These past few weeks at Escalles will probably stand out as happy ones in the future.

To my family, if I do not return from this trial, I ask their care and consideration always for Mme Pezron, who has been just splendid.

I think that all refugees here will have to go tomorrow even Mme Nederleaghe's daughter and children have to be ready to move at 8am tomorrow although they are in the mother's house. The German will so depopulate the village of refugees and occupy the space left, whilst the refugees will be forced back in their hometowns, where no work and probable starvation faces them. Mme P. is alright as she is recensed at Escalles since last September; I hope so but one can never tell.