PETER DE POLNAY AND DODO

DEATH AND TO-MORROW

by

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PREFACE

It was hot and clammy in the train. The train was crowded with sons and daughters of Switzerland: they were hot and very neutral; the train was bound for Aix-les-Bains. It was the 26th August, 1939. The world was in for another crisis, but the crisis did not seem to affect the blue of the Mediterranean nor the corresponding blue of the sky. The bay of Villefranche, now bereft of the American cruiser, *Omaha*, was like a blue tongue. I was sorry to leave the Riviera, but I had no choice. I was leaving Beaulieu-sur-Mer on account of my friend. Since the Riviera coastline as far as the Var was to be evacuated in the event of war, I had decided to take her away to the safe-keeping of mutual friends who loved her and would look after her whatever happened.

My friend, the truest and best friend in the world, was Dodo, my Skye terrier bitch. She came into my life before her eyes were open, she became an integral part of it and I could no longer imagine life without her. Our friendship was based on mutual understanding; we were always of the same mood; we understood each other and made allowances for each other; naturally, she had to make more allowances than I. She never troubled to learn the mechanical parlour tricks of the proselytes. Her eyes were large and very much alive, her ears were like orchids.

I believed nothing would happen: perhaps a second Munich. It seemed a matter of mutual bluff to me, with the Allies far from prepared and the Germans preferring to conquer Europe without having to fight for it. In Nice a French Air Force officer got into the train. Mobilization was in full swing. We talked, the officer and I. We agreed that war was improbable. But what about peace?

"How could peace break out?" I asked.

We couldn't answer the question. My friend was sitting on the floor and her head moved in rhythm with the train. Later the officer said:

"The Poles are a very fine people, but I don't think the people of France will be very keen on dying for a distant town like Danzig. It would be different if France were attacked directly, as in 1914."

My memory buried that remark, but when I stood alone and bewildered in Paris after the downfall of France, it came back to me. The officer also said that mobilization was going like clockwork. That was true.

helping me, for they are still there in France, bleeding and suffering under the German boot. There were many Germans who spoke frankly and even confidentially to me: I don't want them to suffer for that. And it's not my business to give away in this book the traitors and *vendus*, for the French will deal with them when France is liberated; anyway, who am I to sit in judgment?

Therefore, I must give most people fictitious names and I must disguise the exact whereabouts of certain localities, for those bullet-headed, kindly fellows, who potter about in Occupied France wearing mackintoshes and carrying attaché-cases under their arms (commonly called the Gestapo), are no fools and would find the people who helped me. The same applies to their even more contemptible counterparts, the police and *mouchards* of Vichy. But apart from the distortions in proper names, this book contains only the truth.

By truth I mean the truth my eyes saw, my ears heard and, most important of all, my memory retained. There are many conversations recorded in this book. I made no notes; notes would have been too dangerous; and I don't believe in notes. I must trust my memory and my memory can be trusted. It's a very retentive and unrelenting memory. My friends and foes could bear witness to that.

In a moment of leisure I made a rough calculation as to how many Germans I spoke to in Paris; the amazing result was that the figure was well over a thousand. I don't intend in this book to hide my opinions under the proverbial bushel: my opinions are my opinions, and I have neither praise nor derision for them.

And now to terminate this pompous thing, a preface, I conjure up once again or once more *Joe's Bar* on the top of Montmartre, with a lot of higgledy-piggledy steep little streets running up and down on the other side of the window. A German major sits in front of a glass of *Bière de Kronenbourg*; now it goes under the name of German *Bier*. The major is having a well-deserved rest after his sightseeing tour of Paris. It was the usual tour. Notre Dame (the 'e' long drawn out), Napoleon's tomb, the Arc de Triomphe, the Madeleine, and finally the Sacré-Cœur, just over there.

"*Schön, wunderschön*," says the major. But of all that he had seen, Napoleon under the gilt dome of the Invalides had impressed him the most. What a great man he was! A very great man! The major finishes his beer and turns to rest on the bar-stool beside him. "He was a misunderstood man, too."

Dripping with *Weltschmerz*, the major sighs.

ADVENT

CHAPTER ONE

You notice landmarks only when they are far behind you; that is a well-known fact. So it was that my whole life in Paris, including the ordinary day-to-day events, appeared in retrospect to be concentrated in the essence of the evening of the 9th May, 1940. Dodo and I were walking up the rue Norvins. It was a pleasant spring evening, with a large amount of softness in the air; the air was taking on Utrillo's special colour. The narrow street was full of traffic; not peace-time traffic, but traffic all the same. "Careful," I said as my friend jumped up on the narrow slip of pavement. Two taxis went past us. Then there was no further need for caution.

The Place du Tertre opened up square in front of us, full of spring trees, spring tables and chairs, and spring umbrellas. The sounds of music came from the square's many restaurants: from the *Mère Cathérine*, the *Cadet de Gascogne*, the *Vieille Marie de Montmartre*, and, most noisily, from the *Choppe du Tertre*, on my left, and further up, from the *Bohème* facing Saint-Pierre de Montmartre, that fine old church, the grand atonement for that tasteless conglomeration of white stones and cupolas, the Sacré-Cœur. Each one of those bands seemed to be inspired by the same idea; at any rate, they poured out the same tune. One band was a bit ahead, another a bit behind, a third just in the middle as it should be; nevertheless, they all reiterated, "*le jour et la nuit, j'attendrai toujours ton retour.*"

My flat was in the only modern house of the Place du Tertre, *Numéro* 13. A lucky thing I wasn't superstitious. I don't exactly know why I came to live on the Butte, that extraordinary village-like isle on the top of Montmartre, the frontiers of which are the rue des Abbesses and the rue Caulaincourt. Though the Butte is very much Paris, yet you feel you have crossed a frontier if you come up from the Place Pigalle. I didn't live there because the *Moulin de la Galette* was a product of the twelfth century; nor because Picasso lived at the Poirier when he wasn't yet Picasso. I just found the Place du Tertre and the Place du Tertre found me.

I wasn't going home. I stopped outside the *Mère Cathérine*, where the *Patrouille* were sitting. The *Patrouille* consisted of some brainy and talented natives of the Butte. By natives it should be understood I mean men who had lived there at least five years. For good conversation and gallons of *vin rosé* they were priceless company. I sat down.

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There was, of course, Robert. He had a fine beard and wore a beret. He was the king of the Butte; he, for one, was convinced of it. His wit was of the best, and curiously enough he was a good painter. If you want to see the divine spark behind the colour called blue, then look at his paintings. Beside him sat Pedro, dear, dear Pedro, the Spaniard; a painter, too. I liked his drawings and he was a marvellous cook. He was usually slightly depressed because one or other of his five or six sweethearts had got him into deep water. He would sigh, he would moan and consider himself the most unhappy, hunted man on earth. But I know he enjoyed it all hugely.

Then Paul. Of Paul, André Gide said that he possessed a dangerous mind; and Paul, so relates Gide, defines a friend as a person you let down. For it was Paul's redeeming point that he made no secret of the fact that he was a toad—a loathsome toad. Evil days had set upon him and in the half light you involuntarily thought the concierge had forgotten to close the lid of the dustbin and this thing had fallen out of it. He was disliked by all and sundry. But he thrived on dislike and you took pleasure in disliking him. I must add that his brain was one of the best I have ever encountered; a destructive brain. So many good brains tend towards that. He was Belgian by birth and was considered a fine journalist, a fine author, a fine poet. Gide used to swear by him. Paul seldom washed and he got drunk every night. All the hate and malice went into his cup, and from the cup emerged a lachrymose snivelling moron. That was the moment to kick him out: invariably he was kicked out. Next day he was back.

He was educated in England, spoke the language perfectly and hated the English with all his heart. Though he was always ready to give high-falutin' reasons for his hatred, I happen to know his anger was based on purely personal motives. And it's so comfortable to generalize. If you generalize you needn't blame yourself.

As a pure contrast, there was little Mimile. He has very little to do with this book, but it suits my fancy to remember him in print. Mimile had been an ordinary workman in a foundry. Robert had picked him up in a bistro on the Boulevard Extérieur and took a liking to him. He brought him to the Butte and because Mimile took that life and talk seriously he soon lost his job and was put into the Army, where, in order to be able to spend his time with his dear new friends, he indulged nightly in the habit of breaking out of barracks and being absent without leave, and he was sailing steadily towards a court-martial. For me the importance of knowing Mimile was that I came to know an ordinary French

workman rather well, and though I run down the Third Republic often enough, I must, however, take my hat off before their standard of general education; it was the highest in the world.

Now and then I tried to point out to Mimile that his Montmartre friends themselves were not taking their talk seriously; so why should he? Take Robert, I argued; his eyes get wet when he speaks of the beauty of friendship or witty talk or the divinity of *vin rosé*, yet let him suspect a merchant of the flea-market of wanting to buy a painting of his and Robert will rush off kicking over friendship and all the other beauties right away. And it applied to the rest of them. What, I queried, was the aim, the dream of the average artist in France? (By average, I mean his average lack of making money.) To get a cushy government job. Hence their talk was a good deal inspired by the jargon of the political party they hoped would get them the job. Mimile would shake his head and go on risking the court-martial.

Beside Mimile sat the Bulgarian. A burly figure of a man with a large black moustache and Armenian cunning in his eyes. He was a painter, too. He painted outlandish shapes and all you could say for his colours was that they shone like a village fair after sunset. He made a lot of money with his paintings, and it was said of him that he lived in a world of his own, peopled with those foreign shapes and colours. It was peopled, too, with a lot of shrewdness, which he displayed in disposing of his paintings. He had written a book about Pascin, for he was the man who knocked on Pascin's door when Pascin already had done away with himself. The title of the book was *Pascin, Pascin, c'est moi*. That is all I know about that book, since I never managed to read the book itself. Probably my fault, though his words were as alien as his cubes and he disregarded colouring in the shape of syntax. He had a good collection of post-impressionist masters and he sold them at great profit. He and his friends knew, and belonged to, what a French *Tatler* would call *Tout Paris*.

I sat down. My position wasn't exactly that of a member, for it is one of the boasts of my life that I belong nowhere. With the *Patrouille* there was the added fact that my life didn't have the Butte as its one and only aim; my creed wasn't the *Patrouille* and Robert wasn't my king. Robert, who was continuously on the look-out for new subjects, had welcomed me effusively when I came to live on the Place du Tertre. A little later he was less effusive, and later on I was something of an outside member not quite to be trusted. The fundamental grouse against me was, I suppose, that my life was

concentrated in a different direction. Be that as it may, I wasn't one of them, and not being the author of the Decline and Fall of the Third Republic, I wouldn't describe them here at such length had they not been ordered by Providence—and the next best thing at the time, Adolf Hitler—to be my surroundings for some time to come. Moreover, though my life did flow on till the flow was dammed in a different direction, I saw more of Robert and his crowd during that spring and summer than of anybody else.

"Our trouble," the Bulgarian was saying, "is that we worship the dead: our Western civilization is based on the worship of the dead. The Chinese worship their ancestors because they have a living spirit in the hereafter. But we just worship the dead because they're dead." "How very true," Mimile said, and decided to stay out the whole night. "This is a great idea," Robert said, "and it's quite true. The men who make their mark in our world are those who possess the real undertaker mentality. Their minds are in mourning." "And they carry umbrellas," Pedro said. "Very clever," from Mimile.

The conversation went on and the two-man band in the *Mère Cathérine* played *J'attendrai toujours*, and from *Eugène's Bar*, a little to the right, the voice of the radio announcer gave out that on the Western Front there was *rien à signaler*.

Then Michel and Suzanne came. Michel was an architect and a real lover of the beautiful; a nice man, a great believer in the defunct *Front Populaire*, and he wore in his buttonhole the red ribbon of honour which a grateful Blum government had bestowed on him for decorating the French pavilion at the New York World's Fair. He had a fine, sensitive face and his mind was the same. That man could really reach ecstasy when confronted by a real work of art. Suzanne he had met at the World's Fair. She was a typical Parisienne, but since her American trip she could only talk and think American. I rather liked her.

They didn't sit down because of Paul. Michel believed you must draw the line somewhere and apparently Paul was on the other side of the line. A lot of wine was swallowed and then Paul left. He left looking busy and secretive; it was unnecessary because everyone knew that he was going to scrounge elsewhere. The wine was forcing him to go, to hurry and even risk not finding somebody else to pay for the next glass.

"You want to know the latest?" he said to me. "All the new tanks that arrived on the Western Front were so bad that nobody could use them. The bolts fell out. Sabotage. I was speaking to-day to a captain of artillery. He said he didn't want to fight against Hitler. Why win the war? To get the *Front Populaire* back?" And he was gone.

"A man like that should be in prison," Michel said. "Lies!"

"He should be under lock and key," said Robert.

"Anyway, this war isn't against Hitler," I said. "Do you remember what Tardieu said: *Hitler est la fumée, mais la paille c'est l'Allemagne éternelle.*"

In view of what happened to them later on and the metamorphosis they went through, I like to record that they heartily agreed with me, which meant agreeing with Tardieu.

The party broke up. I went with Mimile to dine at *Ebner's*. That little restaurant was in the rue Chevalier de la Barre, a street that has been painted to suffocation. The terrible thing about the street is that were I able to paint I know I would come even from the other end of the globe to paint it. After dinner, Mimile and I walked to the Sacré-Cœur and looked down on Paris. The black-out wasn't too good. In fact, you could see lights that said, here's a boulevard, here's the Arc de Triomphe, here's Vincennes and over there's Montparnasse. "It wouldn't be difficult for German bombers to pick their targets," I said. "Laws can't be enforced on us Frenchmen," Mimile said. "We always go our own way." "I know," I said; "that's why all the defeatist talk one hears doesn't amount to much. If real fighting comes you'll show the world once again."

"Of course. Nobody need worry about us. We'll show 'em. Look at that damned searchlight; it's spoiling the effect of those odd lights all over Paris."

As I've said before, Mimile took the thing seriously. Because our minds still belonged to the years of the crises, similar complaints could be heard right and left.

After a last bottle of wine I went home. It wasn't yet ten o'clock; a rare event for me. I lived on the second floor of *Numéro* 13. My windows didn't have the large vista of Paris that the situation of the house deserved. For some obscure reason a wall ran from the house on the left to the houses on the right and that wall stopped at the third floor. So whenever I looked out through the window I beheld that unyielding wall on one side, and on the other the back view of two very poor old houses and their windows and walls narrated the fact that there was no electric light, no plumbing, and not even water. In the square there was a pump, so why worry? Behind that wall was the whole of Paris, stretching deep into the night, so why worry about that wall? Generally speaking, I didn't worry.

I went to bed, and in a little while the Place du Tertre was before me. It was afternoon and a policeman, a *flic*, stood in the middle of the square. He carried his cloak rolled round his arm and used it as a shield. In his right hand was a revolver and he was firing away

bravely. Mounted on prancing chargers were a few German Uhlans, the same Uhlans that I had seen in my childhood in an illustrated edition of Zola's *Débâcle*. The black-and-white pennants fluttered menacingly as the charging German lances advanced nearer and nearer, and there were no more bullets in the *flic's* revolver. Then he fell and his lone, heroic resistance was dead, and the Uhlans and their pennants were masters of the Place du Tertre.

I awoke and was a bit ashamed because I was perspiring and felt hurt and frightened. I called out to Dodo, and she came slowly, and I had to help her into the bed, for she was seven weeks gone and soon would have her first puppies, the father being a very expensive-looking gentleman belonging to two rich South American women who lived at the Plaza Athenée.

"What a stupid dream," I said, and Dodo seemed to be in agreement. "The poor *flic*, but he put up a fine fight." Dodo thought he did. I seldom remember dreams and know about them as much as any old bearded Viennese; but this one remained so vivid that I found no peace contemplating its harsh presence. I dressed and went out.

I found Nona still at *Joe's Bar*.

Nona was an American and came from California: she was beautiful and possessed marvellous brains. Beauty and brains aren't supposed to go together; in her case they did. Yes, she was beautiful. I can see her before me as I write, as she looked coming up the rue Norvins. The sun is shining. When I see her in the grand manner the sun always shines; the moon is in attendance, too. She is very tall, wears a big red hat by Erik, and before you see them you feel that her eyes are the brightest and bluest in Christendom. But enough of the grand manner.

I sat down at *Joe's* and told her about my dream. She thought it was silly, which only goes to show that she, Dodo and I were thinking along the same lines.

I soon went home again, and around six in the morning the sirens awakened me. Sirens were a kind of weekly feature of Parisian life at that time, and if German planes didn't come you knew you'd hear them at any rate on Thursday at twelve. But this morning there was more shooting than usual, and one gun sounded pretty big; probably on account of its proximity.

Excitement—or call it a thrill—is what I usually thrive on. I therefore went to the window which, though unable to show me Paris, was able to show a lot of sky overhead. At the window of one of the poor houses stood a man. I knew him from the *Choppe*

where the beer only cost *vingt sous*: one of those men who work the whole week and when Sunday comes contemplate the vista of a dreary, hardworking week ahead, yet never complain. "Can you see anything?" I asked. He shook his head. So I went back to bed. I didn't sleep.

The concierge lived two flights below me, at the bottom of the whole contraption. Her name was Mme Marchand and she was middle-aged, and her fat belonged to middle-age too. As befits a woman of her girth, her husband was a meek little man; mild, and she most protectingly called him Papa. Papa wore a cap, the kind of cap Scotsmen used to wear in the days when the ball was kicked as the ball should be. Papa was peaceful, she saw to that; but her eleven canaries made a lot of noise. What is Paris without canaries; and what are canaries without singing? The happy little sounds of the canaries were a boon in comparison to the radio-set which Mme Marchand kept on a table that was close beside the window. Every sound of that radio mounted into my flat. And those sounds were there the whole day long.

Hardly had the firing died away than the radio came into its own. It blared and blared and blared. I didn't listen; blaring has that effect on me. But I listened to an alarm clock going off in one of the poor houses, 'twixt the noise of sirens and gunfire. For that sort of thing appeals to me. But I did listen later on to Eugène, who kept a *bar-rôtisserie* in the house next to mine, and shouted to me as I came out that the big show had started. The Germans had invaded Luxembourg, Holland and Belgium. He shouted to me from his door: in the morning Paris bar-keepers invariably stand at the door. My first thought was, 'Let them come, they will meet their equals.' It wasn't surprising. Everybody had expected it. Now its only importance was that it had happened.

So I went into *Eugène's Bar*. He told me the radio had given the news. I could almost have forgiven the concierge. The morning papers were on the bar, and since they had been printed the night before, and since both the French Ministry of Information and Censorship seemed to be run by a pack of fatuous fools, the papers naturally said that the situation in Belgium and Holland had reached a *détente*.

It's well nigh impossible to speak of that period without commenting bitterly on the French censorship and information. Once in February I went to that Ministry and saw one of the chiefs. A very pleasant man he was. We talked of this, that and the other, and as our cheery chat rolled along, I mentioned that it must strike one as funny to read French reports of five French planes starting out and at least six coming back, then next day to be told in the English

papers that at least two French planes had been shot down. That, I opined, did not breed confidence. He said I was quite right. The English Press was letting them down. That was certainly one way of looking at it.

The French radio was no better. The heavy, self-congratulatory hand of Daladier and the more self-satisfied but jumpy hand of Reynaud kept the press and wireless completely muzzled, which might have been a good thing had the muzzle been a subtle one. It was not; and like all muzzles, it fell off at the wrong moment. Later, after a little screeching, the German muzzle was to be fitted, and to be worn in an accustomed familiar manner.

I think one French journalist had vision, and that was Henri de Kerrillis. Yet how he was ridiculed for speaking and writing about traitors! And Tardieu, whenever he chose to write. It was the misfortune of France that Tardieu was out of the ring that time: perhaps he could have saved a little of the French spirit. But the great majority went on to believe in the invincibility of the French infantry, and agreed with Mr. Chamberlain, that the war was practically won, that Hitler had missed the 'bus, and that, of course, the Germans were starving, had cardboard tanks, no oil, and in the end it was quite droll that the Germans fought at all.

Why lie? I believed them. It was easy to believe them. France for me stood for Verdun and the Marne, and, looking further back, for the Pucelle d'Orléans. It still stands for all that.

"At last," I said. "Yes," said everybody, "at last." Nona said to me, "What do you think is going to happen?" "The Germans are going to get the biggest licking in the world. It was well known they would attack through Belgium, and you can rest assured the French staff has well prepared plans." "You know the Maginot Line doesn't go to the sea?" "I do, but the Belgians have a line of fortifications that is the continuation of the Maginot Line." I was quoting a military correspondent of an important paper. Now it surprises me that I knew at the time that the Maginot Line stopped at Longwy. Most Frenchmen, including soldiers, were convinced the Maginot Line was built to the sea. Had it been, the fighting might still be to-day on the other side of the Line.

Michel, whom I saw at noon, said the Germans were moving into a trap. He was in the Ministry of War in the morning and there he heard it. There was no earthly reason to worry. There was every cause to be elated.

A friend of mine, a very clever Frenchwoman, the niece of a Secretary of State, had visited the front the previous month. I saw

her on her return and she told me I couldn't imagine the material there was behind the Maginot Line and up in the North where the B.E.F. and General Georges's Army lay. The morale, she said, was wonderful, the troops were eagerly waiting for the attack. I also knew one of Reuter's correspondents with the Army: he told me the same story. Things looked really all right.

In a couple of days the aspect of Paris changed. Though the papers were still applauding the advance into Belgium, there was a slight tremor in the air. Refugees from Belgium began to arrive. Their cars sported mattresses on the roofs. It appeared that German planes machine-gunned them on the road and the mattresses were a kind of protection against machine-gun bullets. Quite suddenly new words appeared. Parachutists and Fifth Columnists. These words filled the air, often enough rent asunder by the sirens, though no German planes were ever visible. Then on the fifth day the canaries sang and the radio bleated, and because I had taken to the habit of listening to it my early morning was rather spoiled by the news that Holland had capitulated. Then I noticed that the 'buses of Paris were gone. Officially, it was said, they went to collect Belgian refugees. I believed that, too.

The weather was perfect. Standing in front of the Sacré-Coeur, I looked down, and Paris was more beautiful than ever. At night you could hear the trains leaving for the Front. Then one afternoon the radio, which was giving the news every two hours, announced that the Germans claimed the capture of Sedan. But, added the radio, not giving you time to be stunned, there was a village in Belgium called Sedan, and surely the Germans must mean that. They did not. Within a few days the names of towns of which I'd read so much in books about the First German World War were bandied about. Amiens, Arras and Béthune: and more were to come. Only one never came: Marne.

I saw Paul in *Joe's Bar*. He'd been absent for several days. Now he looked like the dustbin itself. He was drunk, though it was early in the afternoon. He wept, and told me he had flown over Liège and that Liège was in flames. I said I didn't believe him, not so much concerning the flames of Liège, but regarding his aerial presence above them. He was the foremost liar I'd the good luck to know; he admitted it himself. Once I had told him that if he went on lying he would end up by saying he was the best friend of Napoleon. Paul had asked, "Which Napoleon?" So now I told him he was lying. At first he didn't answer, but after drinking more red wine he burst into bitter tears. "Can't you see I'm just being a senti-

mental fool and am weeping for a world that is dying? For France that is dying before our own eyes? I should rejoice, but to-day I still weep." I told him he was a fool; but it was I who was the fool. It's unbelievable, but nothing shook my faith. Reynaud declared, in a hurt surprised voice, that French blood was flowing—a surprising remark to make in war-time. General Weygand's photo appeared in the papers. A well-informed acquaintance told me Gamelin had committed suicide. Then Reynaud spoke on the radio and told the world the truth about the bridges of the Meuse.

Daladier was the owner of a deep voice. It came from the Vaucluse and was the voice of a chief mourner. I've been told that you acquire that sort of voice by drinking a delectable drink called Picon. The number of Picons that produce that voice was put at fifteen; neither more nor less. That sepulchral voice, so rumour put it, had nothing to do with worries about affairs of state and the state of affairs: it was the product of the figure fifteen. I don't know the truth of this, the fact nevertheless remains, that Paul Reynaud appropriated that voice. It was curious to think of that jumpy little man of his pictures and then to hear the tones of a sad bull. I'd once had a dachshund that possessed a similar accomplishment. When you heard him bark you looked everywhere for a Great Dane; but you only beheld a tiny dachshund.

That voice came into my life. Not so long ago it proclaimed resounding victories in Norway: the highway of iron-ore for Germany was cut and would remain cut. These days it spoke of danger and of treason, and made the rather complicated statement that if only a miracle could save France then it would say that miracle would happen. These words were misunderstood and the rumour went round Paris that Reynaud had said that only a miracle could save France. I heard that in a small Breton restaurant in the rue de Mestre, where I often ate with Nona. It was told by two nondescript elderly men sitting at the table beside mine. They were eating *pommes farcies* and so were we. They both referred to Reynaud as a clown and said one should never have got the old *gaga* Pétain back from Madrid. They also said that the Army at Sedan was sold by the *Cagoulards*. They were Socialists and that was the logical thing for them to say; full of spirit they were. They had been called up that morning and were leaving the same night for Orléans.

"*Bon courage*," they said when I stood them a Calvados. "Soon the tide will turn and the Boche will get what's coming to him. There was the miracle of the Marne; there's going to be a miracle this time, too."

I watched them depart through the window; a staunch pair they

were. A comforting sight for the doubtful; but I was innocent of doubts.

It is my firm resolve to indulge in no backward prophecy in this book: a certain type of historical novel pursues that line of attack and fills me with nausea. In works of that school not only is the young Will told that he will become the greatest genius of all ages, but it's even whispered into his youthful ears that at a distant date Mr. John Gielgud will play *Hamlet*: or young Chopin is cheered by the prophecy that he will be the composer of one of the favourite tunes in the B.B.C.'s *Forces Programme*. None the less, I can't refrain from examining the state of my mind in May 1940. That state of mind consisted mostly of a childlike faith in France and the French Army. It was for me an unbeatable army, led by the best generals and permeated by a spirit that would never give in. Shortly before the war broke out a veteran of the last war told me that if the Germans killed every Frenchman but one, that last Frenchman would attack the whole German Army straight away. He wouldn't need arms: '*il aura la rage au cœur.*' It was said so conclusively that for me it was final. I now know that I should have seen things more clearly, especially as I was well acquainted with the deep-rooted corruption to be found everywhere. Like many of my generation, I learned my contemporary history from books about the last war. I looked at this war as at something that fundamentally belonged to the same spirit if not to the same circumstances. Yet planes and tanks after the Polish campaign slightly ruffled my complacency. But France, so we heard, had thousands of tanks and planes.

After the campaign of Poland I had put a question to a French staff officer friend of mine. I asked him what would happen in France if a great number of German tanks attacked simultaneously with low-flying aircraft (dive-bombers were still unknown to me). He said it could do a lot of harm, but, he added, the Maginot Line made such attacks unthinkable.

That was when I was still in Aix-les-Bains, and I remember saying to Nona that probably in this war, too, there would be a number of lost battles at the beginning. Thus the events of May didn't surprise me unduly. The closer the war, the stiffer French resistance would be, and then . . . I had no doubts about 'then.' It was a fool's paradise peopled with the shadows of Gallieni, Foch and the rest of them.

Robert was the possessor of a Maecenas, who was a shopkeeper on a large scale. Needless to say, he had a cushy job in an aircraft

factory. He knew nothing about aircraft production, but contributed handsomely to the Radical Party funds. I saw him at *Joe's* a week after Sedan. It was a sunny afternoon. Every afternoon was sunny in that month of May. He told us stories of the French Army knocking over rabbits running in the same direction, soldiers just leaving the front lines, getting into transports and making off. He was an unpleasant person, a perfect specimen of our materialistic world, and he thought it was very funny.

"One trouble was that the men got frightened by the seventy-ton German tanks. They thought prehistoric monsters were coming. The other trouble is that in this war there is too much motor transport about. All they had to do was to get into cars and lorries and buzz off. Weygand is stopping that. He'll keep the transports far from the front line." Very surprising it all was. He went on to say that the real trouble was that most of the war industry was centralized in the North and in Paris, and it couldn't be moved if the Germans approached Paris.

"You talk a lot of rubbish," I said. "Approach Paris! Why don't you say they'll take Paris?"

"I was joking," he said. "Don't look so solemn and so English."

For during the years I lived in France it was quite impossible for me, where my hybrid personality was concerned, to emerge in the true light. To be the author of English books and yet to be a Hungarian; such subtleties didn't interest the French. Add the fact that most foreigners in France are English, then foreigners who have dogs and are over six feet high are *ipso facto* English. So English I was for them and remained so for the days that were to come.

Joe the barman had a wife. Small, black and loyal, and devoted to her home. There was an aroma of *Bœuf Bourguignonne* about her. She summed it up like this: "You are English but a Hungarian. Few people understand that."

So as not to hurt my English feelings the Maecenas stopped talking of the fall of Paris and the conversation drifted on to the Fifth Column. Fifth Columnist prefects had ordered the evacuation of their departments to create confusion and to impede the movement of troops. That made me understand the radio's continuous reminder that everybody should remain at his post. That part of the show would be stopped too: Mandel was a reliable Minister of the Interior. The afternoon papers appeared. Like the rest of us I first looked at a copy of *Paris Soir*. It was full of stories about parachutists. There was a good one of a German caught wearing a priest's soutane. He was caught and before he was shot he exclaimed that Hitler was his God and *Mein Kampf* his Bible. A picturesque

story, but as propaganda very bad, for the reaction of the average reader was that such people had faith and were no cowards. The papers were full of appeals to buy war bonds: war bonds, and once more, War Bonds.

I said to myself that things couldn't be going on too badly if the Government still needed the money war bonds brought in. If France were in real danger the Government wouldn't think of money. Other more important matters would take its place—such as courage and faith—and the blood of courage which is the blood of faith. So it was all right again.

A few days went by. More sunshine, more Belgian refugees, more stories of parachutists and Fifth Columnists. I went to play bridge in the house of an English friend, and at that bridge party only English and Americans were present. They all said that the French were running; I heard the word running the whole afternoon. Now that the Germans are inside France, I suggested, the running will stop. The answer was that the Stukas and the seventy-ton tanks were invincible. But there was Weygand, I said. It was a pretty gloomy afternoon, though nobody quite believed that those tanks were really invincible. It was talking of the devil in the hope that the talk would exorcise him. In the bars I heard talk of dive-bombers, and whistling bombs, and again and again, the seventy-ton tank.

Then came the surrender of the King of the Belgians. I heard of it on the morning of 28th May, as the first news blared out of the concierge's window. Subduing the canaries, Reynaud's pentecostal voice declared that, *en rase campagne*, King Leopold had betrayed his allies. I later saw a Belgian being kicked out of a bistro and heard that some French acquaintances of mine had put out a Belgian refugee family, babies and all. King Leopold ceased to belong to the *Légion d'Honneur* and had to wait for Vichy to reinstate him.

I went early to the *Mère Cathérine*, and as I came in I saw Robert in the full glory of his beard, wearing one of his Maecenas' discarded flannel suits. He was standing at the counter. "I'm glad to see you to-day, of all days," I said. "I'm glad to see you, too," he said. "I don't want to be alone to-day." "What is going to happen?" said the middle-aged *serveuse* behind the counter. "Don't worry," I said. And as it's the fitting thing to do at a bar, I evolved for her benefit a military plan. Blanchard, Prioux and Gort would attack from the North and the bulk of the French Army would attack from the South, and between the two the *Panzer Divisionen* would meet their well-deserved end.

"Maybe it's true," the *serveuse* said, "but just think of the situation. We won the last war, and twenty years later we're fighting in the same places. It's France again that's devastated. We lost a million and seven hundred thousand men in the last war, and what good did it do us?" She spread out her hands, and her arms were red and her hands were red too. She made a sweeping movement and then stopped midway. She looked slightly crucified. "*Toujours les poitrines françaises.* We didn't extend the Maginot Line to the sea because we didn't want to hurt Belgian susceptibilities, and now they desert us. Or, probably, we didn't build the Maginot Line to the sea because the money was stolen by the politicians. Corruption, corruption all along the line. Look at the *Front Populaire.* Blum, paid holidays, that was all right; strikes and strikes. The Germans didn't strike: they had no holidays. Now they are burning up France again. Guns or butter. We had butter, now they have guns. The end will be that they'll have guns and butter as well, and we shall have lost everything." She was still in that crucified position, with bottles and bottles of apéritif behind her. A man was sitting at a table drinking one of those many apéritifs. He butted in. "Shoot Flandin, Laval and Bonnet," he said, "then we can talk."

"Surely not Bonnet," I said.

"He's one of them, too."

The *patronne* came in. She was practically a millionairess. She was unbelievably shabby. You could easily have given her a few coins by mistake.

"Do you suppose," she said, "that's surprising? I expected that. Our *Généralissime.* What was he doing? Going to London? Is that the place for a commander-in-chief? I'm in my kitchen and a general should be with his troops. I bet that what's-his-name, the German commander-in-chief, was with his troops and didn't go about having himself photographed in places where he'd nothing to do. Nobody was doing his own job. *Déguculasse,* that's the only word for it."

"There's Weygand now," I said, and both Robert and I thought we'd had enough.

We went to *Joe's Bar.* There we spoke to the *serveuse,* too, Marcelle, a very decent girl. Her husband was in the Maginot Line and she was pregnant. We asked her if she had heard any news of her husband. Immediately she produced a letter she had received that morning. Other people's letters have little interest for me; but one sentence in that letter caught my attention. It told how those in the Maginot Line envied their comrades in the North

because they were having a crack at the *Fridolins*, and both he and his mates hoped their turn would soon come. That cheered me up.

"Why," asked Robert, when we were eating our lunch, "do we live in such times?" I shrugged my shoulders. "Ask the Germans. They provide the world with such times at regular intervals. I'm not embittered about the actual situation. We'll pull through. But I'm bitter that such a state of affairs can exist twenty years after the Germans have been licked." "Can you work?" Robert asked. "No," I answered. "Nor can I," and he looked worried. "It's killing my nerves." "You really can't complain. Think of those who lie under the seventy-ton tanks." He shuddered.

It was time, I decided, to find out exactly what was happening. I went, therefore, to see my friend, the Cabinet Minister's niece. Her uncle was a member of the Reynaud government, so she should know. She assured me that a kind of miracle had actually taken place. The Germans had scattered their forces, and instead of pushing on to Paris they had made for the coast, giving Weygand time to regroup his forces, and now it could be said the danger was over. Because it was over we could talk freely and indulge in shuddering at the thought of a calamity that could no longer happen. She said that when Weygand took over he exclaimed in horror that there was less material at his disposal in France than he had in the Middle East. I asked if it was true that Laval and Flandin had been arrested. She denied it: Gamelin hadn't committed suicide either. I asked about the running (*débiner* was the word Paris used). Her explanation was that the eight months' lull had sapped the morale of the Army but the morale was returning. The French always rise at the crucial moment. I nodded. I left her in excellent spirits and I never saw her again. As far as I know she was killed in the dastardly bombing of Orléans.

On my way back to the Butte the sirens sounded. My taxi was stopped by a policeman, who sent me into a doorway. The police emptied the street. The passers-by didn't approve of it and filtered back. A fat woman in a grey dress came walking down the street. She was carrying a bunch of roses and her perspiring face was of the hue of the roses; only redder. She walked on muttering to herself: "This is really too much, this is really too much." One further proof that the heart of the French was in the right place.

Next day, or perhaps it was the day after, Dodo's puppies were born. Why, in Heaven's name, they chose that moment to come

into a bloody bewildered world I couldn't say; but they came. Pedro acted as midwife and Dodo never whined; she was surprised and a little afraid. There were four dogs and two bitches. Names had to be found for all of them, and one of the bitches got the name of Pontoise, for on the day of their birth the Panzers had reached that town. One of the puppies was brown—a rare colour for a Skye. I decided to keep him whatever happened. Nona gave him the name of Cooky. Dodo was a good mother and hadn't much time for me. I hoped that soon she would be completely mine again and by then better cheer would reign everywhere. Two of the puppies I gave to Marcelle Cervierre, the actress, who under her irritating *Comédie Française* manner knew a lot about puppies. She was going to feed them on the bottle.

During those days I kept a diary of sorts. My reactions to the war, I called it, and thought that at some distant date I might publish it. The diary no longer exists. It went the way of all my belongings. Still I remember a passage in which I expressed the pious wish that a Hun parachutist should land near me and what a delight it would be for me to kill him. I don't think the diary explained how that feat could have been accomplished; but I was feeling unhappy that I was spending my time in Paris and being unable to do anything, I wished from the bottom of my heart that I were in the battle that was called the Battle of France.

When I left Aix I arranged for my mobilization papers to be sent to Paris. They were at the *Deuxième Bureau de Recrutement* in the rue Dominique, and it was at the time when Dunkerque was becoming a household word, joining parachutist and Fifth Columnist, that I went to that long street to ask them for God's sake to call me up. Nona, who despite her fine brain, was very much a woman, told me before I went that I was doing it to spite her: she should have known it was just the contrary. To be far from her would make the sacrifice more worth while. And I couldn't explain even to her that since my rather austere childhood I was afraid of being afraid. My father didn't think much of me: he told me so often enough. I readily agreed with him and frequently beheld myself shamefully alone and trembling while the other boys—whoever they were—went forward. Invariably I saw myself trembling under a tree. But that wasn't my whole mental ordeal. For on the road, where the other boys had advanced, there came from the opposite direction a host of old women (the kind of yellow old women who sell Salvation Army papers); they were marching single-file, and as the first one reached me she spat on me. The others did the same; one after the other. It was a long procession. Consequently, I spent

the thirty-four years of my life that preceded May 1940 in trying to evade those yellow old women. The French would call that searching for my *panache*. Now it happens that I'm not given to physical fear. Thus my search was, and remained, fruitless. But as I walked down the rue Dominique the *panache* floated elusively before me.

Moreover, I loved, and shall always love, France. She comes next to England in my self-made devotion, and often the two get mixed up in my feelings; which is as it should be.

As I hastened along to the *Bureau de Recrutement*, for some reason or other my memory lifted out an image that wasn't yet a year old. A friend and I were standing in the dusk at Gattières in the Var looking at the landscape that was so peaceful, with the river in the middle of it. My friend, the product of the best public school and the second best university, remarked how heartbreakingly serene the French landscape was. We then both agreed that for that peacefulness it would be worth while to die. The rue Dominique was the antithesis of that image, so all the rue Dominique could do was to see my steps getting faster and faster.

Confusion reigned at the recruiting centre. The courtyard was full of Italians and Spaniards. I waited. An Italian near me was told to come back on 11th June. Within me a voice said, so 11th June is still all right. I didn't approve of that voice.

At long last I managed to have a few words with an officer, who suggested that I should come back in a month's time. I asked why I wasn't called up, having volunteered a day before the outbreak of the war. The answer was that my medical sheet said that my feet were bad—they're too highly arched—and thus I couldn't be put into the infantry. Into other units only those foreigners could go who were getting naturalized. But, he concluded, soon everybody would be needed, so my turn would come too. My *panache* having once more floated away I returned to the Butte.

Nona said it disappointed her that I was back. The prospect of my going to the war had upset her and now it was in vain.

Now all that was left was to think, to hope, and to listen to the radio which had suddenly discovered that those stirring bars of the "Marseillaise", which tell the citizens to take up arms, when played slowly, resemble a funeral dirge and are very much in harmony with the Daladier-Picon-Reynaud voice. Those bars now preceded the news six or seven times a day. Wits said their new meaning was: *Souscrivez, nous gagnerons*. It's a fact that as the situation was going from bad to worse the more feverish the salesmanship of the government became. The posters told you that if you bought then

France would win. The house was in flames but the grocer was still trying to make money.

The Sunday that followed the birth of the puppies was hot and cloudless; the tables on the Place du Tertre were full of people from town. At one table sat and lunched my friend the banker, the nicest man you could meet. He was in uniform. We had met a few months before in a professional manner, so to speak. For a change, the manner was of my profession. The banker wanted to write a book about peace aims, and he needed a translator into English. We met through my Paris literary agent and I asked an exorbitant fee. He promptly agreed, the advance was paid, and the book, as far as I know, was never written. Those weren't times for acrobatics with the pen. All I gathered was that he emphatically believed that there could be no security without the frontier of France being extended to the Rhine; and, taking a leaf out of Hitler's book, by moving the German population of this side of the Rhine somewhere else, and—what a splendid idea!—populating that land with a mixed Anglo-French population. Quite impossible, but splendid. Also he wanted the German islands in the North Sea handed over to Britain. I sat down at his table and inquired after our book.

"My friend," he said, "it looks as though a German is going to write that book and not I." "Don't be silly," was my reply.

Apparently, he wasn't silly. He narrated a surprising tale. The day before a friend of his was going to spend the week-end at Le Touquet. Driving his car along the road he was stopped by two German motor-cyclists. Little imagination is needed to picture the man's surprise when on the poplar-clad road those two *feldgrau* figures appeared. They stopped his car and politely inquired whether he had money with him. No, they weren't brigands. Much worse: they were German soldiers, and having informed him that one mark was the equivalent of twenty francs, took his francs, and gave him a corresponding amount of marks. Then, following minute propaganda instructions, they thanked him politely, told him to turn round, saluted him courteously, and as the saying goes, buzzed off.

The banker said the reason Weygand left Dunkerque on board a cruiser was that Dunkerque was surrounded and only the sea remained open. Then I very much surprised myself by telling him utter lies, lies that came out of me as if I never had been telling anything else. They were about the terrific strength of the R.A.F. and how they had dropped more than a thousand tons of bombs on German lines of communications. First, he wouldn't believe me, but I grew eloquent; the usual thing when you're lying. Our

conversation drifted on to more cheerful subjects, but I, the liar, couldn't but wonder at the calm of the Sunday feeders. It was a reassuring sight to watch them eat *Coq au vin Chambertin*, which was the speciality of the *Cadet de Gascogne*, and *Poulet Cocotte*, which was the speciality of the *Mère Cathérine*. The first was eaten on the blue tables, the latter on the red ones. It was like any old Paris Sunday.

After I had said good-bye to the banker, I spotted Paul in the crowd. He chased me into *Eugène's Bar* and there told me the latest news. He used to be a big man on *Paris Soir*. That was years ago. None the less, he got his news pretty accurately, though *Paris Soir* no longer favoured him. His news was all about defeat and inefficiency.

"If what you say is true," I said, "the Germans will get to Paris." "Of course," he said. "Has anything been done to stop them?" He rattled on and I drank the wine, but hardly listened. Supposing, I asked myself, the Germans did get to Paris? There was a blank at the end of my question. That blank stopped me from thinking on. My sense of values stopped short of it. "I'll know when the moment to go comes," Paul said. "I'm a real friend and shall let you know in time. Could you lend me twenty francs?" I was glad to give him twenty francs; he spoke like that only to get money from me. That's what I hoped. "They found a whole army corps in Toulouse," Paul continued, "men who had bolted. I know it couldn't have been an entire army corps, but you see what people are saying." I felt a bit forlorn that afternoon.

Pedro came to dinner and explained to Nona and me that the German Panzers were unbeatable; he had seen tanks in Spain during the Civil War. Few those tanks were, but having seen them in action he could easily multiply them in his imagination, and all he could say was God help France and England, who still believe that this war is a repetition of the war of fourteen-eighteen. If the Hun came we should go with him to Perpignan, where he had many friends, and we could live on thirty francs a day each and should we have to walk, he would carry the puppies. I said thank God the puppies had been born, so that Dodo could walk. And I looked at Dodo, who was asleep in the basket she and the puppies occupied. The puppies were like a ring round her, and she, having found her ball, which she'd neglected for some time, now had it in with her. The ball was under her chin and seemed to be a puppy too; in her affection at any rate.

"Pedro," I said, "I don't believe you. Think of the French '75's

the world's best gun." He shook his head. The 75's were mostly left behind in Flanders. When he was gone Nona asked, "If Paris falls is it the end of the war?" "No," I said, "never. There's England. Don't forget there's England."

"And then you would go to England and join the British Army instead of joining the French Army." I nodded. "But Paris won't fall." Then we were silent. The midnight news drifted up along the wall. Dunkerque was beginning that night.

I completely misunderstood the evacuation of Dunkerque. I thought that on account of Dunkerque being surrounded the B.E.F., or what was left of it, was taken by the sea route to some French port lower down, there joining Weygand's army to continue the fight. A couple of days later *Paris Soir* said that Lord Gort, upon his return to London, declared that his troops would meet the Germans again at some future date.

Not only have I no brief for the Reynaud-and-Daladier-controlled war-time Paris press, but I abhor it and I think a fair share of the burden rests on its shoulders. For I feel certain had the people of France known and understood the gravity of the war from the start their morale wouldn't have been stunned by surprise and chagrin; anyway, not so thoroughly. But hats off to the loyalty of the press and information to their ally during the battles of Flanders and France. Never a word of censure, not one discordant tone, all English feats and achievements received their share of publicity. Reynaud was an unfortunate jumpy little man who didn't know which way to turn: and for a politician in France it was difficult to do any kind of turning during that Spring. You can't blame him for the twenty years of graft and partisanship that was his heritage; and it was his and France's misfortune that the mantle of Clémenceau didn't fit his sloping shoulders. But he was loyal; not even the real owner of that mantle could have been more loyal than he. Thus his censors and his press acclaimed Dunkerque as a great victory, notwithstanding the fact that the evacuated Allied Army wouldn't fight any more on French soil.

Dunkerque had a different effect on the public. The story went round that forty thousand Frenchmen were left to perish or to surrender on the beaches of Dunkerque. (With the experience that came my way, I now know who started that rumour. The Germans, of course.) I said I knew England as I knew myself, and it couldn't be true. To prove my point I ran into one of Joe's friends, a soldier who'd been evacuated at Dunkerque, passed through England and had only praise and admiration for the English

and England. I felt like wanting to drag that man round the whole of Paris as a living proof that the stories about Dunkerque were but so many lies. This I record mainly as proof of how clever propaganda was at that time. Needless to say, I'm referring neither to English nor to official French propaganda.

On 3rd June, I was sitting with Dodo outside *Joe's Bar* when I saw Nona coming from the rue Mont Cenis. Behind her the church of Saint-Pierre and suddenly over her and over Paris the sirens. A siren lived near the water reservoir; it made a terrific din. Coming towards me Nona put her hands to her ears, and the sirens shrieked on and the policeman started to empty the square. We went inside the bar and started to have our luncheon. Gunfire was going on in a haphazard way, but there was no barrage or anything like it. Then came a distinctly louder bang and a little man with high-heeled boots said it was a bomb. Rubbish, I said, and went out into the square. I could hear the sounds of many planes and of more firing, but I saw nothing and went back to finish our meal.

In a short while the door opened and one of the constant loafers of the square poked his head in and said the Citröen factory was in flames. We went outside. There was gunfire still and the planes could still be heard and a lot of people were going towards the Sacré-Cœur. I went there and, looking at Paris extended before me, saw big clouds of smoke behind Auteuil, and smoke elsewhere, too. A French officer was leaning against the parapet with field-glasses in his hand. Very kindly he let me have a look and in that conglomeration of dark smoke, flames could be distinguished. I got very angry and said I hoped now Berlin would be bombed, too.

"It's too far away and we haven't got the planes," the officer said, and looked through his glasses again. This was my first encounter with a blotch on the face of Paris. It made me furious.

The powers that were handled the situation idiotically. First they announced that a few German planes had flown over Paris and that there were no casualties. In the same breath the radio told the workmen of Citröen's night shift that work was going on in the usual manner, so they should come as though nothing had happened. Towards the evening rumour had it that there were more than a thousand dead. The following morning sixty dead were admitted, but, of course, twenty German planes were brought down. Photographs of wrecked enemy planes were displayed in the papers. Rumour had by then reached the figure of three thousand dead, not counting the outskirts of Paris where the blitz was worse. It took the authorities two days to release the number of killed, which

was slightly above a thousand. Rumours in this war are worth at times a few armoured divisions.

They released the news simply because the final battle was on and the bombing of Paris had lost its importance. Now there were plenty of details, since the public was clamouring for news from the battlefield. And that battle! And the method the radio used in breaking the first news of it! On 4th June, it announced lugubriously that there was every sign that the new German offensive had started. The radio waxed indignant at the thought that Hitler hadn't given his troops a rest between the two battles; that seemed its one and only care. An hour later the announcer spoke in an outraged voice. Hitler and the German High Command hadn't given the German troops time to get their second wind. I expected him to burst into tears on account of those tired Huns.

So the battle started and I felt certain Weygand's army would stop the German advance on the Aisne and on the Somme. I wasn't the only one.

I had a great friend, a Royalist and a gentleman he was: he could easily have fulfilled the average American's idea of a French royalist gentleman; pity he didn't live in the Faubourg Saint-Germain. His complexion was yellow; his hair dark blue but greying at the temples; his eyes blue; and he wore the most unbelievably cut suits with belts where belts should never be, and if it's true there's always rain before the rainbow, then it must be true, too, that he slept with his white spats on. Let's call him Henri, which is a fine name for a Royalist, for it reminds you of the greatest statesman France had had in the French sense—*Henri Quatre*—the man who knew what France needed in the midday soup. Henri, who used to come to the square quite often, was a personal friend of Weygand: he knew him since the last war and reminded me that Foch had said that if France were in danger she should send for Weygand. The very fact that he had fixed the line on the Somme and on the Aisne showed the master strategist. Curious, Henri added, that whenever France was in danger she turned to the men on the right. Now there was trouble, so she sent for Weygand. Pétain, too; but the old man should be watched. In Spain he was surrounded by most undesirable people. That was news to me. The victor of Verdun stood for all the great symbols of France. But I remembered that he'd been a pessimist in the last war.

Then Henri spoke of pleasanter things; of the past. Almost all the great generals of the Third Republic were Royalists: Lyautey, Franchet and d'Espérey, and if got down to it, Foch and Gallieni,

too. As he mentioned those names I felt the undying glory of France and I thought what a joke it would be in a fortnight's time to remind the doubtful of their gloomy predictions. We talked, and Suzanne came to our table, and the Bulgarian too. They carried on a conversation between themselves, and then something Suzanne said caught my ear.

"It's terrible in town," she was saying, "men go about unshaven, their trousers aren't pressed, there's gloom everywhere." "Look at me," I said: "I'm shaved and my trousers are pressed." "But you're English," she said. "The French are losing heart completely." As I've said before, Suzanne was very much the New Yorker on account of the World's Fair. "I'm French," said Henri, "look at me."

He showed his white spats and patent leather boots; they were spick and span. Next day Henri and his wife hit the road south.

The great exodus had started. Its first impetus was given by the only blitz on Paris. Rumour and fear and an utter lack of knowing what was happening came next; but mostly fear of the Germans. The simple people believed the Germans would cut their hands off and poke their eyes out. The middle classes, the *bourgeoisie* in whose midst rottenness and decay flourished, went because they feared the battle of Paris. But the majority went because their neighbours went. The roads were full.

In October I saw from the train the roads of France. Still littered they were with derelict cars, derelict tables and derelict prams, and there was the feeling that two million people had trekked down those roads.

The telephone communication with London was cut, English papers were no longer to be had. The Belgians were starting southward too. The cars you saw in the streets were piled up with luggage. There is an old Scotch joke about a taxi in Aberdeen crashing into a tree and thirty-six of the passengers taken to hospital. I was reminded of that joke whenever I saw a car.

Reynaud spoke again. Four hundred German tanks had been destroyed and General Weygand had told him the situation was satisfactory. I think it was in that speech Reynaud made the remark, the unforgettable remark, that the situation was dangerous but not desperate. Four hundred German tanks. It was good to hear that.

"The last war was won by the 75's and those cannon would decide the issue this time, too." You heard that all around you that day. You also heard that the Panzer problem was solved. You let them through, cut their supplies, and incapable of retreating they were at your mercy. And whatever would happen there was the battle

of the Marne, the miracle of the Marne, and it would take place again. At last there was a real effort on the part of the government. Hadn't Reynaud said that Weygand, Pétain and he were in complete spiritual unity? The *union sacrée* was here again. Then the miracle. (You didn't quite believe Reynaud, but you believed in the miracle.) *Paris Soir* suddenly said: *Les troupes de Von Brauchitsch marquent des points.* The perfect understatement.

CHAPTER TWO

NONA's mother pops into the story. She was Texan. Having known her, I believe anything that is said about Texas: chiefly that it was the Lone Star State; there could have been room for no other star in the same firmament. On Sunday, 9th June, she came up to the Butte to see her daughter, and said whatever happened she wouldn't leave Paris. She was fond of her flat in the Avenue Victor Hugo and that was that. She had been reading *Mein Kampf* and that man meant business. She was a Daughter of the American Revolution, so she should know. The point was she wouldn't go.

But others went. They were going. I rang up the Minister's niece, she was gone. There lived two English girls above me. One of them had a deep male voice. The other twittered with the canaries. They left. They said they were trying to get home via Saint-Malo. As the bulk of my correspondence came from England, the postman ceased knocking on my door. The *Sunday Times* went out of my life, and talking of Sundays, that Sunday the square was pretty empty, and the parasols and chairs on the square must have thought it was a rainy day, and because chairs and parasols are simple-minded, they must have marvelled at the blue sky and hot sun. I lay on my bed after luncheon and listened to the puppies asking for more milk. Dodo sat on the bed and was watching the puppies carefully. She hadn't yet recovered from her amazement that all those fat little things had been produced by her.

The bell rang. The charwoman was already gone, so after a long argument with myself I got up and opened the door. It was Paul. He was panting. He had the gift of being in a hurry.

"You must go," he panted. "The government is going, *Paris Soir* is moving to-morrow. You must go. The Germans are here next week."

I was impressed. "I don't want to go," I said. "Of course, you're a Hungarian," he said. "You'll be all right with them. But think of the battle. Do you want to lie under the ruins of this house? Not the befitting end for an intelligent man. And do you want to be cut away for good from your England?" "Are you positive about their coming? What about Weygand?" "What can Weygand do? No planes, no tanks, troops deserting. I was speaking to a man who got back from the front yesterday. A whole battalion of infantry went into action with forty rounds of ammunition." "Each man?" "No, the whole battalion. And they went: they were Bretons. Then they saw their officers had deserted, so their morale broke, too. He's here now. But you must go. Think it over. Do you suppose the Germans are going to like you? The Hungarian who writes English books? Why should a Hungarian write English books? Not because he dislikes the English, what? And think of the battle of Paris!" "Is there going to be a battle of Paris?" "Yes, that knave of a Reynaud is going to stage a battle here to influence American opinion. All the Americans are going to weep over the ruins of the *Folies Bergères* and the *Florence*. The effect will be nil." He laughed his little malevolent laugh. True, Reynaud had expressed a desire to fight in front of Paris, in Paris and behind Paris. Nothing like the mantle of Clémenceau. "I think I'll stay," I said. No yellow old women for me. No, thank you.

"I wonder how your friend, Mr. Churchill, is going to like it?"

"I suppose you're going to be a great man when your German friends come." He shrugged his hunched shoulders. "I don't care. It would be too much work. Anyhow, I was consistent all along. This corruption and inefficiency couldn't end otherwise. Look at the people. They don't care. To win the war in order that the Reynauds, the Daladiers, the Blums, the Pierre Cots, should rule them?" "Still, life was better in France than anywhere else in the world. One should fight for it." "With forty rounds of ammunition?" "Laval and Flandin must be delighted." "People don't want Laval and Flandin. They want something new, something fresh." "I see. And the Germans will purvey it. Tell me another." He told me.

That evening Nona and I had a long talk. Should we go, or should we stay? My biggest fear was if the Germans came they might send all the Hungarians to Hungary. Then I would be away from England's war: that worried me the most. And the battle of Paris? I advised Nona to go. She said she'd rather die with me: I said I thought I'd rather die with her than with anybody else; but as none

of us had ever died before we were rather talking through our hats.

There was a lot in favour of our going. If the Germans came none of us would have any money; at least I wouldn't have any, with England out of the picture. But who cared about money? The point was, I argued, that the Germans wouldn't come. The miracle. It was just as bad in 1914, and look at the result. That time the government ran away, too. As Gallieni put it, to give resistance a new impetus. Trust governments for that. This now would be the miracle of Paris and I'd never forgive myself if I didn't see it.

We went out and paid a call on Mr. Squibb, one of the most likeable men I'd the good fortune to meet. He was, and I hope still is, an American millionaire of Squibb's Toothpaste fame. He was only eighty-two, small, with a short beard, and slightly hunched. But his mind and spirit were as erect as anybody could wish. He had lived on Montmartre for twelve years and had a whole colony of people he'd helped at one time or other. He was sitting in front of a bottle of Beaujolais, which would be followed by his faithful friend, Hennessy. He said it was all rubbish, the government was frightening the people so that they should buy more war bonds. Actually, the Germans were being pushed back. It was a matter of war bonds; the Germans had no money; hence they couldn't win. A lot had been said, and is going to be said, against capitalism, but there will remain in its favour this charming capitalistic faith of a man in June 1940, who, incidentally, had been taken by his father to Lincoln's funeral.

"All my life," I said to Nona, "I've let myself be carried along. I'll do the same this time."

She agreed. In the night there came the sounds of distant firing, so I was told next morning. I don't know if it was true—I only heard the puppies whining—but Dodo was nervous. I told her maybe we'd have to walk to Perpignan. None of us laughed.

I was early down on the square. Robert was already sitting in front of the *Mère Cathérine*. He was worried. The Maecenas had decamped with wife and children without letting him know. His parents had put on hobnailed boots the night before and wanted to start walking. Whither? They themselves didn't know. He persuaded them to take their hobnailed boots off. This morning they had the hobnailed boots on again. He was at a loss and completely at sea. His sense of values was going. While we talked we saw people coming out of those poor houses, with bundles and the most unbelievable things—a man had a tallboys strapped to his back —and march off towards the town.

Three soldiers walked through the square. They were in rags, unshaved: men who had left the fight. "Where do you come from?" I asked. The one on the right shrugged his shoulders and they walked on. Then I saw Marcelle Cervierre coming up. She was with a Lett painter who lived on the Avenue Junot, where she lived too. She told me that she was leaving on a lorry, the man had petrol and would take twelve passengers at a thousand francs for each. He was going as far as Poitiers. She could take no luggage. She was leaving the two puppies with her concierge. (That beast drowned the puppies the same day.) There was room for two more, so Nona and I could come, and we could take Dodo and the puppies, provided we kept them in our laps. She must have my answer in half an hour. She practically implored me to go. The Germans would be in Paris on the 15th, as Goebbels had promised. Then for years and years I would be cut off from England and the world. News from nowhere. She was going chiefly because she didn't want to lose contact with her friends who were already gone.

"All right," I said. "I'll let you know." Nona said, "Let's find out if we can go. Don't forget if you stay here for years and years you'll be unable to send your writing to London." "Damn my writing." But I went. It was that fear of being sent to Hungary that made me go.

I went to the *Commissariat de Police* of the XVIIIe *arrondissement*, for foreigners weren't allowed in war-time to travel without a *sauf-conduit*. It shows how far our disposition was from actuality that we considered such formalities necessary.

The police-station was in a side street at the bottom of the steps that lead from the rue Mont Cenis to the backyard of Paris, so to speak. An immense crowd had gathered outside the *commissariat*. The fear, and chiefly the bewilderment, that had become the usual features of the Parisians were very much in evidence. To be winning the war for months and months, in fact, to have practically won it, and then the enemy at your heels with your unbeatable army retreating and retreating . . . how could you expect much else? The fat little *commissaire* was in the middle of the crowd, going from one to the other. He looked like the typical Frenchman of over forty. Well fed and probably still harbouring scars from Verdun or different Sommes. I stated my case. I said I was a Hungarian, would like to leave, and could he give me a *sauf-conduit*? There was an American lady who wanted to leave, too, and would he give her the same thing too? He answered that to get a *sauf-conduit* one had to wait at least a fortnight. A huge weight dropped off my shoulder. The responsibility had ceased to be mine.

"So I must stay," I said. It was a joke in a sense. Thousands of other foreigners left and, needless to add, that nowhere were they asked for their *sauf-conduits*. There was nobody to ask for them. The little *commissaire* looked me in the eye, and with a beautiful flourish in his voice said, "Monsieur, you won't be alone." Once again I knew France was unbeatable.

As I climbed the stairs back to the Butte I met many of these new hikers with their belongings; anyway I was staying on. *Paris Midi* had an appeal, surprisingly enough not for war bonds but for the unemployed to come and work on the defences of Paris. Back at the *Mère Cathérine*, the proprietor was drinking *café arrosé* and said the Germans might take Paris but would never get to the Place du Tertre. We'd stop them. So we all said we'd stop them. And how!

That very Monday afternoon the proprietor left for the Ardèche. His wife pulled from behind her shabby apron a wad of notes and exhorted that would-be defender of the Butte to look after himself. I've no doubt he did. The six o'clock *Paris Soir* announced that Albert Sarraut, in his capacity of Minister of National Education, bowed before the coffins of some schoolchildren who had been murdered by German bombs during the raid of the 3rd. It was fitting for M. Sarraut to figure in the papers during the last days of the Third Republic. Whenever anything had befallen France in the last decade M. Sarraut was sure to be in office. So in front of those little coffins he represented for the last time a régime that was very much responsible for those little coffins.

That day, as I've said, was Monday, and there was hardly anybody left on the square. *Numéro* 13 was emptying too. Only an old couple remained on the first floor and a schoolmistress who lived on the same landing as I. In the afternoon three German fighters were seen to be flying low over the town. Montmartre being much higher than the town, those planes appeared to me impertinently low; as though French ground defences didn't matter any more. A couple of bursts from an A.A. gun and the planes rose a bit, then calmly flew on. There was something about those planes that reminded me of shooting wild geese. The wind is fast, the birds are high, you fire with only the remotest hope of hitting them, the geese make a flip with their wings for they know you can't hit them. The *patronne* of the *Mère Cathérine*, with her mother and son, got into a lorry and drove off to safety. The planes were still visible.

Tuesday was an empty day. It was the turn for Joe and his wife to leave. In true French fashion such a move couldn't be made alone. So Mrs. Joe's mother and aunt arrived from the blue and

her younger sister, too. A brother, a munition worker, had deserted his post and was joining them. There they stood outside the bar getting ready for the long trek. They put a table upside down on top of a pram and the legs of the table were supposed to serve as protection for a lot of useless stuff they were taking. Cups and saucers, but chiefly linen. Their dogs got ready beside the pram and after standing us all a drink Joe got ready to close his bar. But first he waited for the news. It came through and said that the French Army had retired to lines the G.Q.G. had foreseen, and so far the enemy had tried in vain to get in touch with them. Even a moron understood the meaning of that. The news also said that a hundred enemy divisions were thrown into the attack. They were, if my memory serves me right, at Senlis.

A young woman, whose husband was at the Front, and who had decided to move with Joe's party, came shrieking out of the bar. "They're here," she shouted, "a hundred tank divisions." "Don't be an idiot," I said. "There are no hundred tank divisions in the world." "Oh," she said, and then shouted at me, "I'm not staying, I'm going." "It's silly to go," I said. "Is it?" she answered. "Well, I'm not one of those who want to eat chicken with the Boches." Apparently, I was.

Joe locked the door and they set forth. So one more bar was closed on the square. The first to close had been the *Choppe*. The proprietors were Italians. They closed the day the Duce administered his stab in the back. Probably they would be the first to reopen.

Robert said in the afternoon that Michel and Suzanne were going. Michel, who was a Maecenas of his, too, hadn't offered him a lift either. That was depressing for a man who believed in the beauty of friendship. His parents were gone: their hobnailed boots had carried them away. Robert didn't want to stay alone, so he was going to sleep in Pedro's studio. Paul had disappeared. But Michel. . . . I went to his house and he wouldn't listen to me. The man was in despair.

"*Nous sommes foutus*," he said. "There may be resistance in the Gironde or in the Pyrenees. But we're finished; finished." And he wept for himself and the France that used to be his.

The day passed slowly. Now and then we stopped and listened. No, it wasn't gunfire.

Starved, bewildered, lonely dogs were to be seen in the streets: people just left them before they rushed senselessly southward. Poor little things, they stood at the street corners trembling,

understanding nothing. Some of them were still trailing their leashes: many of them had come from outside Paris. But the people of Paris were kind and the dogs were given food. The dogs, however, just stood and trembled. I spent my afternoon carting them water and food from my flat. I wanted to take a few up for the night but on account of the puppies Dodo didn't let them in.

The latest rumour was that the Police were closing the gates of Paris because too many people were on the road. Michel and Suzanne went off in a car full of luggage. In the evening I did hear a rumble that sounded like gunfire. Probably it wasn't. The little tailor who lived in the house next to *Numéro* 13 told me in the *Mère Cathérine* that it was foolish to go. He wouldn't go, nor would his wife. Next morning, of course, both he and his wife were gone.

But next morning didn't really come. There was no sun and no light. A dark carpet of dirt enveloped the town. I don't think I shall ever know how that came about. The radio very solemnly said that it was a smoke screen the Germans used to cross the Seine; later the version was that it came from the burning oil refineries of Rouen. It's of no special importance. All that mattered was that even light and sun had deserted the *ville lumière*. Darkness and silence. Silence; for the noise of Paris was gone. Every town has its own noise. I know that if I were spirited from the other end of the globe, with eyes bandaged, to Piccadilly Circus, I would recognize from the noise that I was in London. The same way Paris had its own noise, which belonged to her like the Eiffel Tower or the Métro station of Réaumur-Sebastopol. That noise had gone with the refugees. I went and stood with Robert before the Sacré-Cœur. Large and fateful Paris was under the carpet of smut and darkness, and the stillness of the grave came floating up to us.

"You can hear it," Robert said.

Roy Campbell wrote of Toledo during the Spanish Civil War, "Toledo, I can hear the silence of your bells. . . ." It seemed to me that I could hear a thousand years suffering down there; but without any sound. I left Robert and went into the Sacré-Cœur and prayed furiously to Saint-Louis of France and to Sainte-Jeanne d'Arc to hurry up with the miracle and not to let France die. It was their France, not mine, so would they please listen to me, the stranger, the foreigner. The Paris papers had often quoted of late d'Annunzio, saying how lonely the world would be without France. So please, Saints of France, think of my loneliness.

Then I came out into midday darkness. Robert was still there, holding Dodo, and when we got back to the square we were rushed by our friends.

"Did you hear?" they shouted, "Russia has declared war on Germany. We're saved." I think tears came into my eyes. Marthe, the *serveuse* who was left in charge of the *Mère Cathérine*, put her arms round my neck and kissed me. "Ah, monsieur," she sobbed, "you see, we are saved."

Great was my surprise as I beheld Joe and his party outside his bar. They were back because there were too many on the road. They couldn't advance. By advancing he meant he couldn't get away.

A military car turned up. Mimile was in it. He told us he was leaving but we who stayed shouldn't worry because now Russia was at war with Germany. The German advance had stopped and German troops were being rushed post-haste to the Eastern front. The news was just coming on, so we went into *Joe's Bar* and the news came and there wasn't a word about Russia, only about the German advance, and that British troops were still fighting in France; the 51st Highland Division, as I was to find out much later.

"Why don't they announce it?" I asked.

"They'll announce it in an hour's time," somebody said, and the same person told us that he heard it from a policeman who heard it from a passer-by who stopped him on his beat to impart the happy tidings. Came the next news, and I knew it was a lie. That lie, by the way, was spread by the Fifth Column. The Germans had used the same tactics before the fall of Warsaw. There the rumour had it that Italy had entered the war on the Allied side and French and Italian troops were advancing into Austria. A very clever touch, for I was witness to the depression that followed those few minutes of elation.

The Police still cut a fine figure with their old rifles of 1914. In the afternoon the rifles went; the revolvers, too. The policemen, shorn of their glory, looked sheepish. Ambassador Bullitt had telephoned to the American Legation in Berne, which in its turn telephoned to the American Embassy in Berlin, which in its turn informed the Germans, that Paris was declared an open town. Probably the ghost of Gallieni listened in to those telephone conversations; for twenty-six years ago when the danger was similar he telephoned too. I could have wept. A farthing was worth more than glory.

When evening came I stood at the steps beside my house and I saw signals in morse all over Paris. The Fifth Column was at work. Then, not far from me, a lamp started to signal. I went and fetched a policeman. He wouldn't come.

"What's the good of it?" he said, "you know, and I know, the

town is full of traitors. If I caught one, on higher orders he'd be released. And I don't want to be pointed out as the man who showed too much zeal before the Germans' entry." "The Germans' entry! They'll never come here." "I wish you were right. You are English?" "No, I'm Hungarian." "You're wise. Don't say you're English." I blushed in the dark. What should I do? Tell him that I was English? I didn't know. I stayed between the two stools for over a year.

Nona, Robert, Pedro and I dined that night at the *Mère Cathérine*. There was a dear French girl with us, Madeleine, one of Mr. Squibb's protégées. The two-man band played tunes to cheer us. They played 'Tipperary' and 'We'll Hang out the Washing on the Siegfried Line' and the '*Madelon*' and '*Auprès de ma blonde qu'il fait bon.*' Two Englishwomen sat at a table not distant from ours. One of them, mellowed by *vin rosé*, asked M. Richard, the violinist, to play the '*Marseillaise*' for her. But M. Richard, who was from the Pas de Calais and looked as Donald Duck should look, said no, you don't play the national anthem in a restaurant. And our table said, of course you don't. Now I regret M. Richard didn't play it: it would have been fine to hear the '*Marseillaise*' for the last time in Paris. Even in the *Mère Cathérine*, which was as old as the Revolution.

At a table there sat a lone soldier: he leaned over and said that the Siegfried Line was taken. The Germans had left the Line untenanted on account of the push from the north, so the garrison of the Maginot Line took it and were penetrating deep into Germany. I flatly refused to believe him. Only the miracle was left. The miracle came, as a matter of fact, it had already taken place, though neither I nor the German High Command knew it. We had an excellent dinner with langouste and chicken, and we hardly paid anything. It was either for us to eat the langouste and chicken or it would be thrown away. No other customers were expected. Not before 15th June at any rate.

"I'm ashamed of being French," Madeleine said before we parted. "Look how everybody is running. Where is France? What has become of France? This isn't the France my father told me about," and she didn't wipe the tears off her cheeks.

I walked back to *Numéro* 13. The door was ajar. Nothing surprising about that, for in the afternoon Mme Marchand, complete with husband, dog and cat, had deserted her post. Before leaving she planted the eleven canaries on me and said she'd leave the entrance door open because it was worked by an electric bell, and if these were a short circuit I might easily be locked in or locked

out, as the case might be. So she'd leave the door ajar. Very nice of her. When I remonstrated with her and said it was her duty to stay on the job, she asked whether Reynaud had stayed at his job. Moreover, she told me, she went to see the landlord. The landlord was gone, leaving no address. She went to the *gérant*. The *gérant* was gone, leaving no address. She saw no reason why she should stay. She called Miquet, her dog, and walked out on *Numéro* 13.

So the door was wide open and as I reached it seven young men were going in. I asked them what they were doing there. One of them said they were living there. "That's a lie," I said, "get out." "Who are you? The concierge?" "Get out, or I'll call the police." "You dirty foreigner," one of them said.

Well, seven were a few too many. I went to *Eugène's Bar* next door and Eugène fetched a couple of sticks and armed with those sticks we went back. We went into the house and mounted the stairs till we reached the flat roof, but the young men were gone. Those young men were caught at dawn by the Police as they were pilfering an empty house. The open door of *Numéro* 13 must have given them the wrong impression.

This brings me to Thursday.

Robert and I stood again in front of the Sacré-Cœur, and now and then you could hear a detonation. A factory or so being blown up. "Machine is killing machine," he said. Dodo was depressed. We walked back. Joe and family had started off again, so his door was closed. The *serveuses* of the *Mère Cathérine* were waiting for us, the only clients. There was Pedro, but Paul was still nowhere. The Germans, we heard, were fifteen miles from Paris The miracle should look out and watch its step or it would be too late.

Nona came and said her mother was still reading *Mein Kampf* and nothing would induce her to go. M. Richard came over to us and said his pianist, a Pole, had left. He tried to bully him into staying, but the man had left. Then we beheld the Pole coming up the rue Norvins. Yes, he had wanted to leave, got as far as the Porte de Clichy and could get no further. The crowd was too dense. Then, God only knows why, I turned to Pedro and said, "You don't want to be under the Hun any more than I. What about us two starting off as we are, right now?" "Yes," said Pedro. "That's what we should do. We'll start off, you and I." We had another drink and never spoke of going again.

Nona and I lunched at the *Mère Cathérine*. Langouste and chicken. Robert came and sat down and made a queer remark. "I wouldn't speak English any more," he said. "You both speak French. Why don't you always speak French?" "Nobody is going to stop me from

speaking my language," said Nona. "Nor me," I said, for English is my language. And we spoke English during the months we spent under the German boot, and never let the boot interfere with it. And Robert said something else, too.

"If I were you two I'd start right away to speak more quietly. Don't you, Nona, call Hitler a swine and a vulgar paperhanger, nor you, Peter, go on saying Boche all the time. How do you know that you're not going to be denounced for it when the Germans arrive?"

"They won't arrive," I said mechanically. But it left a nasty, bitter taste behind. The afternoon saw more refugee dogs arriving: it's interesting they all made for the Butte. I read in a history of the Butte of Montmartre that in the old, old days when Paris was just parturiating, the Butte had been a refuge for man and beast alike. The hunted involuntarily made for it. It's a likeable thought that those poor dogs which honestly weren't to be blamed for this war should instinctively follow the course their ancestors took.

Evening came. We dined on langouste and chicken. After dinner we walked towards the rue Mont Cenis, and I heard a man saying he was going to buy a German dictionary. At the end of the street, where the stairs began, stood a small gathering. All were looking down. Nothing was to be seen, but they went on looking down. A woman with a lot of fair hair was saying the Germans weren't really too bad. She'd known one and he was nice. She said that *guten Tag* meant good day and *guten Abend* meant good evening. Apparently she'd already provided herself with a German dictionary. In that little crowd was a great friend of mine, a charwoman. I knew every charwoman of the Butte, and many glasses of white wine we had together in the good old days before their daily work began. The good old days when there was nothing to report from the front. This charwoman, recognizing me, shouted that Monsieur and Madame should go, go: go immediately, otherwise the Germans would imprison us. The *Fridolins*, she shouted, hate the English. Well, we weren't English, but it was nice of her to worry about us.

If you asked me who were the salt of Paris I'd unhesitatingly reply the charwomen. Elderly, slightly garrulous, but with a fine sense of humour and all the guts in the world. She came over to us and talked to Nona: Frenchwomen had a habit of liking Nona. As they talked the notion came to me that one of the main reasons why so many people had deserted Paris was because there hardly exists such a thing as a Parisian. The people of Paris, of which my charwoman friend was a perfect example, have no roots in Paris. Talk to any

of them and you soon find out that either they or their parents had come to Paris from the provinces. Everybody has a mother or an aunt, or a sister in the provinces. Now, when the danger became acute and they were deserted by their rulers, they instinctively, like those poor derelict dogs, hurried to their original refuge.

"*Fraŭ* is woman and *Mann* is man," the woman with all that hair said; then I saw Madeleine, Robert and Pedro coming up the stairs. The night was in. The crowd was still gazing. "Come up to my flat," Madeleine said.

She lived nearby and her flat was the highest in Paris. So we went up to Madeleine's flat, and Pedro said the latest news was that the Germans had been pushed back ten miles. Robert was at the window and asked for Madeleine's field-glasses. He looked through them and exclaimed that he could see a cannon, nay a battery, firing. We all went to the window and in the direction of the forest of Vincennes you could see reddish flashes, and if you listened carefully you heard the guns. I took the glasses from Robert and looked through them. It was true: a lone battery of 155 was firing on the outskirts of Paris, at the beaten foe of 1918. It went on and on. Flash followed flash, and at times all the guns fired simultaneously, and then there was a glow as though morning were coming.

"We're in the battle," Robert said. "Imagine, we're in the battle." "The battle must be moving southward," Pedro was saying. "We're at the extreme edge of it."

I didn't heed them. I couldn't take my eyes, or rather Madeleine's glasses, off that battery. There was pathos and a dying, indomitable spirit in those lonely continuous flashes. One battery defending Paris against one hundred and fifty divisions of murderous Barbarians. As I watched it I finally knew that this wasn't the edge of the battle, the battle wasn't moving southward; there was no battle: only a few guns, ghosts of a dead glory saying for the last time that this was Paris, and here lies France.

"To think of it," Robert said, "we're in a battle."

"Battle?" I sneered from the window. "Can't you see there's nobody firing at them. It's just a last beautiful gesture."

Madeleine was pouring out drinks. I left the window. It was unnecessary to stay there. Those red flashes were deeply impregnated in me, and even now, as I put it down on paper, I have but to close my eyes and there's the night of 13th to 14th June and those red flashes light up the vale of memories. In September I met a Frenchman who, it turned out, was with that battery. He said the gunners had tears in their eyes as they fired their guns. Whenever

the roar of the cannons ceased the sound of sobs came into its own and then gave way to the roar again. I'm glad and proud that they sobbed and I am glad that with tears running down their dirty, unshaven faces they still inflicted some harm on the Hun.

We sat and talked and drank Pernod, and then suddenly Madeleine started to cry. Pedro was walking up and down and went to the window and called me over. The sky of Paris was now illuminated with orange, yellow and deep red; the oil tanks were burning. It was a tremendous glow, and the smell of burning was in the sky. It rose and spread; it was huge. It might interest the curious that one of those enormous tanks had not been fired. The usual inefficiency, I suppose. And there, in the midst of the fire, stood millions of gallons of inflammable stuff and didn't catch fire. Probably the petrol was later used by the *Luftwaffe* when bombing London.

At the Gare du Nord an engine was shunting. It seemed to have no cares. It was getting on for midnight and the battery was silent. I stood on the flat roof of *Numéro* 13 before going to bed, and the petrol was burning and its glow was spreading, and the engine was still shunting, but gunfire had ceased. I forced Dodo to leave the puppies and sleep with me that night: something was amiss with her, too. Her playfulness and sense of humour were gone.

In the night I heard masses and masses of low-flying German planes. They sounded as if they felt at home.

I was up at seven, and bathed and shaved quickly, then went down. The square was empty. Two policemen were coming down towards the rue Norvins. Slightly ashamed they looked, unarmed and shorn of their importance of yore. I stopped them. I knew them as I knew practically everybody who lived round there.

"Any news?" I asked.

"Nothing special," one of them answered.

"So we're still holding on," I said. It was a bit of a query.

"Maybe somewhere else we're holding on, but not here. The *Fridolins* are already on the boulevard Magenta. The staff is on the avenue Foch."

"Thank you," I said.

I never want to thank anybody like that again.

A man in uniform rushed past us, went into one of those poor houses, and a little later came back buttoning his civilian coat. "Just in time," he panted. He was one of the natives, and he told us that down on the Boulevard he ran into German motor-cyclists, and they waved to him to get away. I left the small group and ran into an old

woman. Ageless, she was. In a monotonous voice she told me that the water reservoirs were going to be blown up and that I should fill my bath-tub and buckets with water, for God knows how long Paris would remain without water. I made a deprecating gesture. I didn't want water. Unnecessary to add, no water reservoirs were blown up. The situation was too tame for that.

I stood there, irresolute, in the square. Nothing moved. The old woman and the policemen were gone. I wanted to smoke. I realized I had no cigarettes. I left the square and went into a *Bar-Tabac*. I mechanically asked for a glass of white wine, and I drank it. A few men lingered at the bar. There was no talk. Anyway, I was in a hurry. I couldn't say why. I emptied my glass and went to the tobacco counter. I asked for cigarettes. A middle-aged woman was the proprietress. She handed me a packet of High Life, and when I wanted to pay she said to me: "Just keep it. I'd rather give it to you than wait for them to take it away from me." She added a second packet and then, driven by a visible impulse, started to distribute her stock of cigarettes. I went out.

I returned to the square, and there was Paul: he had a perfect black eye. According to his story, he had got it the night before from a policeman. But that, he said, was the last thing that policemen would ever do to him. The policeman hit him because he praised the Germans in a pub. To-day, he assured me, that policeman would praise the Germans much more than he ever did. "You're talking a lot of rubbish," I said; "it's a damn good thing he hit you and you'll see that nothing is going to change where the sentiments of the populace are concerned. They'll hate the Germans more than ever." "You'll be surprised," Paul said.

I was surprised, nay, stunned. A little later Nona, Dodo, Paul and I walked down to the Boulevard Clichy. In the rue des Abesses the market was on. A lot of women, and vegetables lying in the middle of the street. We reached the Boulevard through the rue des Trois Frères, and stopped at the corner. A crowd had collected and the pavement was dark with it. On the road the Germans were coming along. It was a grey stream; and that first day of occupation it was an endless stream.

The first thing I noticed were their helmets, so very different from the French and English helmets. German helmets are boastful: they are in themselves a declaration of war. The next thing that struck my eye was their excellent equipment and their discipline; and, then, how tired and young the troops looked. It was horse-

drawn field artillery that was continuously rumbling past us. Every single thing was covered with dust, and one could tell from the men's faces that they came from a long way off. I know a bit about horses, and their horses were splendid; in fact, all that horses should be. The men who were mounted and the men who sat on the gun-carriages looked rigidly ahead. I know it surprised me to see them in Paris, but it was they who seemed much more surprised to be in Paris. Children have such expressions on Christmas morning.

To add an ironic touch to this scene, the columns were passing beneath an immense War Bond propaganda poster. With German helmets and German guns in close formation beneath it, the poster proclaimed to all and sundry: *Nous vainquerons parce que nous sommes les plus forts.*

Some way further on was a cinema from which the manager and staff had decamped; the last film had been *Deuxième Bureau Contre Kommandantur*, and a frightened Hitler was visible on the poster. The cannons rolled on, and now and then an armoured car came patrolling along; slowly, as though looking right and left. Paul broke the silence, saying that here was the result of the hot wine of the soldier and the cool Pernod of the officer. It sounded like an ugly epitaph. And the Germans, unlike their armoured cars, were looking neither right nor left.

"What about that washing on the Siegfried Line?" Paul asked. "The English," Nona retorted, "have a queer sense of humour. You'll never understand it."

"He who laughs last, laughs best," I said a bit shamefacedly, for I dislike proverbs. But this wasn't used proverbially. It was a sort of prayer.

Quite suddenly a German horse reared and fell and the German officer fell with it. Several members of the crowd advanced, lifted him, dusted him, and helped him back on his horse. But, as a tonic, a policeman appeared, waving his truncheon in no mean fashion, and inquired whether people could cross the road. The words he used were: Go home. A German officer immediately halted his column and some people crossed. The soldiers did not look at them. Thereafter every ten minutes or so the columns stopped and those who up till then had been at home in their own town were allowed to go their way.

Later on, field-kitchens put in an appearance; and once, while a column was at a standstill, it occurred to one of the army cooks, who had learnt his knowledge of economical conditions at home and in devastated Polish villages, that to offer a little food would be

timely and befitting the prescribed propaganda. He did so and I am ashamed to record that Parisians, coming from the market with their shopping-bags full of food Germans hadn't dreamed of for years, accepted the enemy's propaganda crumbs. Odd remarks drifted towards us and quite a few settled down in my memory.

"They look like any ordinary people." "They don't look like people who cut off your fingers." But the one I heard most often was that the Germans weren't tall, no taller than Frenchmen.

Alongside the Germans little groups of French prisoners were marching. They were in rags and they were dirty, prisoners in their own capital, and beside the be-helmeted conqueror they looked a sorry sight. The sort of sight you refuse to contemplate even in a nightmare. People rushed out from the crowd and shook hands with them, the rest waved at them. What could those poor victims of twenty years of ineptitude do? They smiled back, tired, and marched on. Actually they had to run a little to keep up with their victors.

More and more guns, and the armoured cars patrolling the street. We turned into a little bistro and sat down. It was quite crowded and the conversation was all about the Germans. Generally speaking, the impression was favourable. A man with a large gold watch-chain opined that they were very correct. Correct was a word I was to hear *ad nauseam*. "Who would have believed that this would happen twenty years ago!" was a chance remark overheard. A young man said, "The better man wins. Look how smart and well equipped they are." A woman came in and declared they were very correct and so young. Then an elderly woman raised her voice and said, "Yes, they'll behave marvellously in the beginning, but then they'll become real monsters. I know them. I lived under German rule for four years in Lille." "It's no good talking of the past," said a girl, "they're here now and our famous invincible army was beaten in one month. And they seem to be very decent. No swank." "And I bet they won't cut off your hands, nor poke your eyes out."

The perfectly idiotic propaganda of the past eight months was beginning to tell. "Where is Reynaud?" a voice asked. "I wish I knew. I'd murder him myself. To deceive us as they all did." "It was the English who deceived us." Several people looked at us, for Nona and I, not heeding Paul's warning, were speaking in English. We went on speaking in English and the talk rolled on, and the Germans were considered more and more correct.

When we emerged into the street again artillery was still moving along. The crowd was slightly thinner. And then I heard in the

crowd a most interesting story. I believe it was genuine. As one little group of French prisoners arrived on the Place de Clichy a woman recognized her son among them. The son rushed to her and they embraced on the edge of the pavement. A German officer rode up and on discovering that it was son and mother meeting in such undoubtedly moving conditions in perfect French he declared that, as a gesture of the goodwill that the Führer and his people had for poor misguided France, he would liberate the prisoner, and the prisoner could depart in peace with his mother. Needless to say, this story raced down the Boulevard and didn't make the Germans unpopular. In view of what I learned about German methods later on, it wouldn't surprise me to hear that the whole scene had been carefully staged by them. But perhaps I exaggerate.

Nona and I were silent as we walked up to the Butte. Paul was full of fun. He drew our attention gleefully to a poster which said the French *poilu* would win provided you bought war bonds.

We got to the stairs that lead down from the Place Emile Goudeau, a tiny little square with a few trees and two small hotels in it and a small statue in the middle. Usually a lot of children played in the square. The rue Tholozé runs steep into the little square, and if you come from the rue Tholozé you have the optical illusion that an unbroken street runs sloping on to the rue des Abbesses. You can't see the steps at the bottom of the square till you get to them. As we reached the stairs we saw a German motor-cyclist racing down the street and my heart jumped in anticipation of the German falling down the stairs and, with God's help, breaking his neck. The German was already in the square, and without lessening the speed of his engine turned into the rue Gabrielle, the only outlet from the square. You have to know that out-of-the-way square very well if you are to turn like that.

"You see," Paul said, "he knows Paris better than any of us."

One further proof of German efficiency. Many people saw that; it wasn't much, but there was a terrible comparison so near at hand that it couldn't be overlooked. A similar little proof of German efficiency were those German officers who spoke Breton fluently.

On the Place du Tertre there were no Germans; only silence. The Italians at the *Choppe* had reopened their pub. I can't remember how the rest of the forenoon passed. Like the square, it was just silence.

After luncheon Nona decided to go and see her mother, and I went with her. As her mother lived on the Avenue Victor Hugo, we took the Métro. The Métro had been running all the time. In

the Métro we saw three French soldiers, grimy and unspeakably haggard. I spoke to them and they said they had come from the Somme and were trying to catch up with their unit. They had got into the Métro at the Mairie d'Issy, where they had neither seen nor heard anything of the Germans. I told them the Germans were in Paris and they wouldn't believe me. Then they did believe me and they were downhearted. One of them had a rifle, which he put under the seat. They decided to get off at the furthermost Métro station and try to dodge the Germans. They had no money, so I gave them some and we wished each other *bon courage*.

When we reached the Etoile station Nona and I got out. We ran up the stairs, came out into the sunshine and there, as though hit with an axe, I saw the swastika flying on the Arc de Triomphe.

There had been in my life a period when I passed the Arc de Triomphe at least four times a day. It had become for me not only a monument of France's glory and French heroism, but had become an intimate part of my life, a life that was woven around certain ideas which the Arc de Triomphe came to embody just as much as the Lion and the Unicorn. So now the flag, or rather the trade-mark of eternal German aggression, was doubly painful. I felt weak in the knees, and there was an empty feeling within me as if all that is life had gone.

A military band was playing and in a car a German general was taking the salute. The general's car ran hither and thither so that all the troops should get some view of him. There were plenty of watchers. They watched as you watch a football match, but with much less interest. There was no excitement in the crowd. Apathy, complete disillusion, a crowd without bearings. To go from the Métro to the Avenue Victor Hugo you have to cover a biggish slice of the Place de l'Etoile. So I saw the swastika and heard the band a longer time than was good for me. I knew there were a couple of tears cruising down my cheeks, but I knew too that I could hold them back. I'm referring to all the tears that remained unshed.

William Bullitt, the Ambassador of mighty America, had taken a rose to Jeanne d'Arc a few days before. My humble, small contribution was those two tears; and I should have been happy had the sky turned dark with bombers of the R.A.F. Had one of their bombs hit me I should have died ecstatically happy. Because real, intrinsic feeling has no monopoly. Nona, who was very erect but very red, turned to me and said, "If thousands of English bombs were dropped here and now, I should die happy."

We went on, and the music shrieked and the swastika fluttered

in the breeze, coming up from the Champs Elysées, and then I saw a large wreath, with the same swastika, on the tomb of the Unknown Soldier, the soldier who died fighting the elder brothers of those who deposited that wreath. I thought I would vomit. The crowd was silent and watched. Nobody spoke.

In the quiet Avenue Victor Hugo, which extended like a haven after the Etoile, I realized that my knees were made of lead. There was a restaurant on the avenue called the *Griffon*, and the many English and American residents of that very English and American *arrondissement* were the chief patrons. We went in and I asked for two brandies-and-sodas. The proprietor, small and fat, said to me, "You're English, you two, eh? Well, all I can say is that your Winston Churchill should make peace quickly because we French have had enough of this war. The Germans, they're correct people. I've worked with the Germans to-day and they left here several thousand francs. I've had enough of you English!" That was almost worse than the swastika on the Arc de Triomphe. In no time we were in the street and Nona said to me, "Why didn't you say you aren't English? You're Hungarian." "Why didn't you say you aren't English? You're American." "I'd have felt a coward had I said so." "Well, there you are."

Her mother wasn't at home. We walked back and Nona said she'd look in on the American Embassy. Now we noticed that on every one of the twelve avenues a gun was posted, looking from the Etoile down the avenue. The gunners stood by. Many German cars were racing about the Champs Elysées and swastikas were hoisted on the hotels. At the corner of the rue de Berri was a large garage and German soldiers were taking the cars out and painting on them *Wehrmacht* numbers. The wholesale stealing had begun. More and more cars were racing down the Champs Elysées. Some of them were full of flags that would soon flow from buildings that were never conceived for them. Actually, the Germans later on took the swastika off the Arc de Triomphe. But for me to have seen it that afternoon was sufficient: it had served its purpose.

We stopped at a café near the Rondpoint. It was full of the usual crowd you see in normal times in night-clubs where the French don't go. Practically every client looked like a South American, and was unshaved. In a corner sat a few German officers drinking champagne. They looked happy. Some of the surprise had worn off. The waiter looked at us curiously as he served us. We were already out of place there. Part of a dead past that didn't matter any longer.

The Place de la Concorde displayed two Messerschmitts that had landed there. A notice was on the gate of the American Embassy, *Amerikanische Botschaft*. German sentries stood at the gate. We went in. Nona's mother was there with Jane, an Englishwoman who was staying with her. Jane was the sort of woman you frequently met on the Continent—with a husband somewhere in the background. You didn't know whether she was divorced or a widow; you didn't bother to find out. The sort of woman who, on an income of about £350 a year, eats only once a day to save money for dresses from Lucien Lelong, and loses at bridge two hundred francs, which upsets her budget, so goes on losing again. Jane was on her way to the room where British subjects were to register with the Consulate which would henceforth look after British interests.

"Terrible," Jane was saying to me, "everything is lost. But we English, we'll fight on. We'll go down fighting. We won't surrender. You've seen them. They're unbeatable. Of course we'll lose, but we'll die fighting." She was screaming a little in her hoarse, intense voice.

"England won't lose," I said doggedly; "she won't."

Then Nona and I went to see one of the American vice-consuls and asked whether he could marry us. We'd wanted to get married for a considerable time. Often we tripped down to the Mairie of the XVIIIe, but either there were too many people waiting or one more paper was needed by the insatiable French red tape, so we tripped out again and remained unmarried. But that day we both felt that the storm that was blowing so hard could easily blow us away from each other. The consul, however, said, which we knew beforehand, that in France a consul couldn't perform the marriage ceremony. So we went out and for the moment we felt safer; for at any rate we had tried.

Towards the Madeleine were more flags. A military band was marching to the Concorde. We had enough of Paris and went back to the Butte.

At dinner I said to Nona that somewhere something was terribly wrong. I'd fallen for most of the popular belief and now I'd have to unlearn everything I knew and start afresh. The first thing, I said, was that we were wrong about the Germans. All we were told about them was utterly wrong. Those people weren't starving and had no cardboard tanks. They surely weren't short of the things you need to wage war successfully. They had steel and petrol. That was a fact which not only the devastating events of the last months had shown but were seen by my very eyes that long-drawn-out day. The next point now was: how did I and the world in

general reach those wrong conclusions? Who brought the news from Germany? The refugees.

The refugees had told the world that Germany was bankrupt, her army no good, the *Luftwaffe* a bluff; that she couldn't stick a long war because her morale was so bad, that she would come a cropper at the first attack against France. That was what the German refugees had been saying for seven years. They said it in books, in newspapers, and in conversation. It now seemed to me that if they wanted what they positively did, England and France to fight Germany (being Germans themselves they apparently forgot that Germany would start the fight without encouragement), then they paid disservice to the cause of the Allies and their own momentary cause (to get back to Germany) by underestimating for their own purposes Germany's real strength. Had the French known what they were up against, the initial defeats wouldn't have turned into a rout, and probably their strategy would have been different. But that was past history and what mattered was that I knew nothing whatsoever about those *feldgrau* masses that were the successful invaders. Later the conviction grew on me that it had suited the Germans that the refugees should spread the tale that Germany wasn't strong. It created confusion; one of the cardinal rules of German propaganda is to create confusion.

"I must find out," I said, "and I shall."

The Bulgarian painter was dining with us and he expressed his admiration for the German helmet and uniform. That kind of helmet belonged to the conqueror. We were at the *Mère Cathérine* and somebody said that two German officers were at the *Vieille Mairie*, the restaurant with the blue tablecloths.

"Let's go," said the Bulgarian, and I said, yes, by all means.

The two German officers were standing at the bar and were talking in stiff, hard French to the schoolmistress who lived in our house. She was telling them that on 3rd June German bombs had killed many schoolchildren. "That's impossible, Madamay," said one of the Germans. "We only bomb military objectives." "I'm telling you, you killed many schoolchildren." "Poor little children. Madamay, we Germans we love children. Probably that school was near a military target. Our airmen try so hard, but you know you can't calculate to an inch where a bomb drops. Poor little mites. May I tell you, Madamay, how grieved I am to hear this? It was your government and the English who forced this war on you, but now let us hope that it's all finished. For the Führer will show his generosity to France, have no doubt of that."

I've never before heard goodwill dripping so heavily. Then he and his comrade drank to peace.

It was the Bulgarian who first spoke to them. One of them was a tall Saxon, and seemed delighted to hear his own language. He looked as I imagine a German officer should look—all angles. I have never lived in Germany, in fact, all I know of the country is that I motored through it years ago. As a child, with the other six languages that I picked up, I picked up German too. Now it was to serve me.

"You both speak German?" asked the officer. "You're surely not French."

The Bulgarian said he was a Bulgarian and I a Hungarian. The German considered that delightful news and said that Hungarians and Bulgarians were old comrades in arms of the Germans. It's hardly necessary to mention that I didn't relish the compliment. (In the last war my father was dismissed from the Austro-Hungarian diplomatic service because he quarrelled with the Germans.)

Germans always ask questions, hence his next question was whether Madamay was French, and if she wasn't did she speak German. I said she didn't and she was an American. That interested the German enormously. He lost interest in the comrades-in-arms of yore and wanted to know what Madamay thought, as an American, of Germany and the Germans. He clicked his heels humbly and was all grins and obsequious politeness. In short he was rather disgusting.

"He wants to know what you, as an American, think of the Germans," I translated.

"Tell him we don't like them."

"Madamay (the accent was catching) says Americans don't like Germans."

The officer immediately embarked on propaganda. Would I explain to Madamay that the Germans were peace-loving people, and this war was thrust on them? Madamay should recollect, as an American, that Wilson's Fourteen Points were the only reason that Germany laid down arms in 1918, and that the Fourteen Points weren't kept, and then came a plea for good Germany that had no place under the sun, was kept from the fleshpots of this world. . . . It was a pocket edition of a Hitler speech. I must say it was delivered with a lot of ingenuity.

"Ask him," Nona said, "why they didn't accept Roosevelt's proposal last year?" The German's answer was ready. Roosevelt couldn't be trusted, he was a Communist, and he entreated Madamay to be careful, for that Communist was leading her country

to disaster. I think he could have shed a tear or so for the good cause. Poor America. Nona walked over to the schoolmistress and he gazed sadly after her.

"I can see," he said, "that Madamay doesn't like me because she doesn't know us Germans. But she'll like us once she comes to know us. But why," he added, "does everybody fear us Germans?" "Does it astonish you?" I asked. "It does. We want to help the world." "But the world doesn't want help. It only fears you." "The world will be for ever grateful to Germany. Do you realize that we're bringing a new order to the world?"

His eyes shone, then the questions started again. "Why do you live in Paris? A Hungarian should live in Hungary, a Bulgarian in Bulgaria." "You aren't in Germany, either," I said. I thought I was funny. "But I'm fighting for my country. Why are you here?" "Because I like living in France."

That puzzled him. Germans are a poor people because all they have goes on the preparation of wars, so when they travel it's either on business or to spy for the Fatherland, God curse it.

"You should be in your own country. If every Hungarian felt as you feel, who would defend Hungary?" "From you?" I felt like asking.

Then we asked him how the war was getting on.

He became brisk and business-like. The war was going on very well. To-day they were in Paris, in a week's time they'd be in the Pyrenees. Then rather quickly I asked what would happen to the English? He said England would be invaded in a short time.

"They'll fight," I said.

"We know that. They're Nordic people, too. But they can't resist us. We'll kill off every one of them, then they can go and thank that criminal Winston Churchill of theirs."

His face contorted with rage as he mentioned that hated name. Every German I spoke to hated Mr. Churchill with all his might. I believe that as far as the Germans were concerned the name Churchill meant as much as fifty well-equipped divisions. They feared him at least as much, the main reason being that they were aware that he wouldn't be satisfied with the collapse of the so-called Nazi regime, and because they knew he'd fight to the finish.

The German was partly drunk with the beer and wine he was swallowing in return for his occupation marks, and since he was a bit drunk he became maudlin. He asked me if I knew England, and I said I knew England well. Then he asked, why should two Nordic races fight each other? Germany was ready to give England a just peace. But first she must get rid of Winston Churchill. If she

didn't then she'd be *kaputgeschlagen*. Then England being conversationally a hard nut to crack, he talked of the easier subject, France. To me, the Hungarian, he didn't speak kindly of the French Army. The French, he said, ran.

"There was a lot of treason, wasn't there?" I asked.

"The *fünfte Kolonne*," he said, and laughed. "We're cunning, aren't we?"

"Very," I said.

I asked him many more questions and I found out he was an officer in the regular army, and had served under the Weimar Republic, too. The Weimar Republic hadn't treated the officers badly. From Ebert onwards they respected the officers and did everything to strengthen the army. "Believe me," he said, "that five minutes after the Armistice we were already rearming."

I believed him. The Weimar Republic, according to him, was the right thing as long as Germany wasn't strong enough and the international situation remained unfavourable. I asked him what he thought of Hitler. He beamed. The Führer, he said, possessed all the great German virtues. He was the embodiment of the German idea, the man they'd been waiting for. With the Führer, Germany would go from victory to victory. Nothing could stop that perfect combination. In fact, the man was Germany.

It was getting on, and he called to his comrade that they must be going. They'd be in the battle again to-morrow, he said. To cheer him up I said he might get killed.

"I've been through the Spanish civil war, the Polish campaign, Norway, Holland, Belgium and France. If I must die, I die for my country. That's the life of a soldier. I escaped death several times, but that doesn't mean it wouldn't get me to-morrow."

He said good night and clicked his heels and saluted, and then gave the American Madamay a special salute.

That night in bed I was thoughtful. The morale was good. One more lie decanted. Of course this man was a regular soldier and the morale of the professional is usually good. None the less, I felt it would be similar with the rest of them. I wasn't disappointed in that.

"Dodo," I said, "we've been deceived. Yes, my sweet, we've been deceived." My friend looked sad, as though she'd been deceived more than I.

CHAPTER THREE

THERE lived on the Butte three old English sisters. Their combined ages must have amounted to some 200 years. They used to be acrobats many decades ago. They had stayed on in Paris and now spoke French with a Cockney accent and English with a Belleville accent. Prim, harmless little old women they were. I ran into them next morning, 15th June, the day the Germans had fixed for their entry into Paris. The sisters stopped me.

"Now, sir," they said, "we will become Germans. It looks like it." The old little sparrows waited patiently for an answer. "You'll never be Germans," I said. "If France doesn't fight on, England will fight on. But France will fight on from the colonies." "Thank you very much, sir." Relieved, they walked away.

In the afternoon a German car drove up and stopped before the *Choppe*. Two very young German soldiers got out and went in. I went in, too. I engaged one of them in conversation and he also was from Saxony. He said his car was an infantry signalling car, and since Antwerp seven of them had been killed in that car. He thereupon took me outside and showed the spot on the car where a hand-grenade had hit it. According to him, the number of German casualties was high. I asked him if the French had really run. His answer was that the resistance on the Somme had been stiff. The Senegalese and Moroccan troops especially fought well. The Legion, of course fought well, too. Then I inquired how the English fought. With a gratifying inward sob I heard his reply.

"We made no English prisoners," he said. "They were either dead or wounded."

That boy had an uncle in Pittsburg and he'd been several times to America. He spoke English passably well. His companion was drinking with the young woman who a few days before had shouted at me that she wouldn't eat chicken with the Germans. She lived in a house nearby and in a little while she went there with the other German soldier. Anyway, all that had nothing to do with chicken. I'm glad to say that woman wasn't French.

"Look here," I said to the German soldier, for I couldn't very well tell him what I thought, "I look at this from an historical point of view. You were here in 1815, then again in '70, then the French defeated you, now you're here again, who knows whether you won't have the French upon you in twenty years' time?"

"I don't worry about things like that," he said. "*Der Führer weisst.*

He knows how to safeguard us. It's my duty to fight, and I leave everything to him."

"That must be a great comfort. To have somebody who saves you from thinking."

"You put that very well. The Führer saves us all the trouble of thought. We do what he tells us and he makes his mind up for us. He knows what we want."

That, I thought, was very interesting.

Later on an armoured car appeared on the Place du Tertre and stopped outside my house. The soldiers, there were four of them, got out and went into the *Crémaillère*, which was next door to the left. I stopped before the armoured car, and though no expert on armoured cars, I soon established the fact that it wasn't of cardboard. I couldn't help remembering the story that was circulated but a year ago about the English or American journalist driving a baby Austin out of Prague and meeting a German tank division on the road. The little runabout collided with the first tank, which broke in smithereens and the little car remained unhurt. One more story to help the Germans to conquer France easily.

In the evening Nona and I looked into the *Crémaillère*, where there were about eight or ten Germans. We ordered a drink at the bar and there was a lonely piano in the corner. Nona went over to the piano and started to play 'God Save the King'. It was great to hear it. Two Germans rushed up to her and said it was *verboten*. What did she think?

"I'm an American," Nona answered very calmly. "I'm playing an American song entitled 'My Country, 'tis of Thee'. If you stop me playing it I'm going immediately to the American consul to complain." The Germans apologized, clicked and bowed, and on the second day of the occupation of Paris I listened in peace to 'God Save the King'.

As I've said before, in *Numéro* 13 there remained an old French couple who lived on the first floor: the man was over eighty, and a doddering dotard he was; the woman was a young thing of sixty and could talk any old donkey's hind-leg off. She'd come to me a couple of days before to express her disgust at the concierge deserting her lodge; actually, she was very much afraid. Now I went to see them, for they had a radio set and there I listened to poor Reynaud's appeal to President Roosevelt. It was a grand appeal, but I wished the announcer wouldn't read it so mournfully. His voice implied that the appeal would fail. The old man was sleeping, and she said he'd wept the whole day long. I thought it was nice that somebody did weep. The radio never announced the taking of Paris.

The old man's wife was anxious. It was on account of her jewels. Would the Germans search the house, or wouldn't they? She'd seen some Germans in town and they seemed decent. So perhaps she could hope. I said that my personal hope was that Paris would be retaken. She said that was out of the question. The war was lost. It was sad, very sad, but there you were. She sighed and then said there's something good in everything. Now that France was defeated there was no chance for a Popular Front government. And peace after a lost war wasn't as bad as war itself. Victory would have been the victory of Socialists and suchlike people. And now one would no longer have to live in fear, fear of losing one's property, fear of being bombed, and fear for one's relations on the battlefield. If the Germans did take her jewels there surely was going to be a clause in the peace treaty for compensation by the French government in a case like that. It was very surprising.

Not so very surprising if you came to think of it. Through the windows the lights of the restaurants showed. The black-out was over. It was to come back with a vengeance, but for the moment lights shone. The curfew wasn't on yet--that was to come next day. However, looking out through the window it all looked as though war had finished. It did seem so to many. For weeks and weeks afterwards I saw people seriously trying to find the threads of their lives before September 1939. For a little time it looked as though those threads were really there. In the end you could lose a war now and then. The past glories of France had proved that France was a glorious nation. So a defeat shouldn't be considered too tragically; and now let's get back to the *pinard* and the *pot au feu*. It definitely was one way of looking at it.

I had heard already such remarks. In the next few days they were more vigorous, more to the point. The Germans undoubtedly were a blot on the landscape, but once there was peace or even an armistice they would depart. Music blared from the restaurants in the square.

I left the sleeping old dotard and his wife and went down to the *Choppe*, and there were all the charwomen and workmen of the district, and two drunk German soldiers at a distant table with professional prostitutes, the prostitutes you see in certain streets down-town but never on the Butte. The soldiers were coy with a lot of wine inside them and those five-francs women were just as much out of place as the Germans. I spoke there to an elderly man, a foreman in a factory that had closed down. A nice man he was, with his roots in Normandy, a typical example of the one great virtue of the dying Third Republic: general education. You could

talk to him on any old subject. If he was unacquainted with it he told you so frankly; and that I believe is the greatest virtue education could produce.

"Monsieur," he said, "now that the Germans are here I hope my brother is going to be released."

His brother, a few months ago, had been sentenced to three years' imprisonment for defeatist words. Defeatist words were one of Daladier's creations immediately after the outbreak of war. There were none of the three slogans of the Republic in that *Décret Loi*. This man's brother went to jail because he'd said in a pub that an unprepared country like France had no right to go to war, and there were traitors among those in high office. "He must be freed now, mustn't he?" Another man joined our group and said, though his heart bled for France, it gave him extreme pleasure to see his boss white with fear. He was a small clerk in an unimportant government department, and many times had complained of the bullying and nagging his chief indulged in since the outbreak of war. A third person considered it extremely gratifying that you didn't see those accursed *Gardes Mobiles* in the streets. This third person was a very poor man and he hawked inoffensive goods without a licence. He had neither the necessary pull nor the money to obtain one. I saw one in front of the Sacré-Cœur, a policeman marching him off to the police-station because he was selling picture postcards. (The men who sold smutty pictures weren't marched off, for they could give nice pecuniary presents.) As I listened to them it occurred to me that these people were positively glad that the petty tyranny of the government had ceased.

There had been no fighting in the winter, the government had failed to light the *flamme sacrée* and its small and narrow tyranny had irritated practically everybody I came into contact with. The *propos défaitistes* were, of course, the worst. The government's answer was, logically enough, that there was a war on. Since it had failed to make the people of France interested in the war (I'm not trying to be funny) only the pettiness of it all remained. On a safari you might easily tire of looking for a bull elephant when nasty little mosquitoes bite and irritate you.

One of the German soldiers took a snap of his wife and children from his pocket. He showed it to the prostitute who was sitting nearest to him. There were tears in his eyes as he looked at the picture of his family. Such a sweet wife, those tears said, and such lovely children—four of them, to make Germany greater and prouder. Rapture was written on his face. The rapture of a good husband, good father and good German. During all that rapture his

left hand held on to the paper image of his family; and the right hand was purposefully remaining round the prostitute's heavy, shapeless breast. I went home.

Sunday was the great day. From early in the morning the Germans were streaming up to the Butte. They came in numberless cars; many had Belgian, French and Dutch numbers. Once my heart stood still with a cold sickly feeling: I saw a lorry, an English army lorry, full of men of the *Luftwaffe*. But that day there was more in store for my heart. Many of the cars sported British helmets on their bonnets. As the Red Indians of Fenimore Cooper wore scalps of their killed enemies, so did the soldiers of the *Kulturvolk* dress up the bonnets of their cars with English helmets. I thought o the calm assurance with which the English soldier wore thaf helmet in the five corners of the world: it stood for power as natura and as part of my life as the sun or the sea: and now it was a sign of defeat, nay, of ridicule, almost pity; no, I didn't know where I was.

"You'd never have believed this, would you?" Paul said. At the next table outside the *Mère Cathérine* a German officer was smoking Woodbines. For weeks and weeks you smelt Virginia tobacco wherever Germans went.

Hordes of cars were coming and the planes were flying low and making a terrific racket. There was a plane every five minutes. They flew lower than the towers of the Sacré-Cœur. I suppose all that display was to frighten the downhearted. It told on your nerves. And the cars and motor-cycles! They never stopped. Then another plane, then a 'bus load of S.S. men followed by an armoured car coming for a Sunday meal. In Vienna and Prague, so we were told at the time, many people committed suicide after the Germans had put in an appearance, for the simple reason that their nerves couldn't stand it. (In Paris, the great surgeon, de Martell, had killed himself on the eve of the Germans' entry into Paris, but he died, so his letter said, as a protest of French pride.) I understand those people, but I must admit that as a display of power it was immense. I ruefully commented that day that if my head were opened a German plane would fly out of it.

A long Horch stopped and a high officer of the *Luftwaffe* alighted. He went into the *Mère Cathérine* and called the head *serveuse* aside. He ordered a dinner for fifty officers; money didn't matter and he wanted with the dinner excellent wines and fifty ladies. The *serveuse* was surprised and said they didn't cater in ladies. The officer thought she was joking and it took the *serveuse* some time to explain

to him that a French restaurant wasn't a brothel. Before the officer left he said in his Teutonic version of the *homme galant* that the *serveuse* looked bad tempered.

"Naturally," she answered. "My mother was living at Dunkerque and I've no news of her for the last fortnight."

"If the escaping English didn't kill her," the officer said, "she's all right. We look after the French." He told her a long story how the Germans fed the refugees on the roads. The story was true. Those were still days of happy augury and of corresponding propaganda; and feed the calf before you slaughter it. A German civilian was with the officer. As they went out the civilian nudged him and I overheard him saying, "Paris. Think! Paris. Who would ever have believed this?" Not I, at any rate.

That day the Germans were like locusts. At lunch-time the restaurants were grey with them. More came in the afternoon, they sat at every table in the square and were very friendly and got drunk. It was rowdy drunkenness, and after what I'd heard of Hitler and his army it was quite astonishing. The Spartan army deep in orgies; for orgy it all became. The street women of the nether regions of Paris, where *amour* is tasteless and cheaper than a drink, swarmed up too. It was no longer the Butte that any of us had known. The bands in the restaurants were playing Viennese valses; it was incredible the number of Viennese valses they knew. Under what bushel had they been hidden?

It was a great tourist festival. The noise and drunkenness progressed far into the night. But it wasn't for the natives to watch it. The curfew was on. At nine sharp the streets had to be emptied. I'd seen two private cars that day. Those were the last ones. Next day the order was out that only German cars were allowed to circulate. Well, those pleasure-bent cars, with English helmets on their bonnets, needed room.

Nona and I decided we wouldn't observe the curfew. The Germans wouldn't command us. The joke of it was that at the *Vieille Mairie* where, as neighbours and good customers we were well known, they refused to serve us, so we went to the *Mère Cathérine*, where it was rather disgusting to be sitting alone with hundreds of Germans. The two-man band had suddenly started off *J'attendrai*, the most hackneyed song of the season, but a cold and hot shiver ran through me, for didn't the song say, *J'attendrai, le jour et la nuit j'attendrai toujours ton retour?*

A young S.S. Lieutenant came over and asked us in very good English why we weren't at home, as it was after nine? Were we

English? I said we weren't and he was obsequious when he heard that Nona was American, and Heil-Hitlered her and went back to his table. I noticed that officers of different arms and services were sitting higgledy-piggledy together, but the S.S. sat alone. A curious feature was that officers and men dined together. They appeared to get on well. We left early and both of us reached the conclusion that in the future we'd observe the curfew carefully. We didn't feel nice for having been out when the owners of Paris were compelled to be at home. Nevertheless, I looked into the *Crémaillère*, where drunkenness, noise and cheap women had reached their nadir. The Führer may drink water; his soldiers definitely preferred alcohol. They were shouting, hugging the women and at times some of them were sick and would vomit on the floor. The others laughed and went on making much noise. Among the prostitutes there was an odd woman or so who wasn't of the profession. I knew two. Both had worked in munition factories and were now out of their jobs, which meant they were penniless. Moreover, they were, by now, convinced that the Germans didn't cut off hands and poke out eyes. The German soldiers were full of stories of how they had helped the refugees on the road.

Paul was there. No curfew would keep him from red wine. He had news. When the Germans had entered Paris there was only Roger Langeron, the Prefect of Police, who hadn't deserted his post. All the other authorities had run away leaving chaos behind them. It had surprised the Germans. They had expected something else from the Grande Nation. The friendly reception by the population surprised them, too; they felt the same sort of amazement about Napoleon's hat that had been, so to speak, left on the roadside in Versailles. They thought Napoleon's hat would have been more honoured by his erstwhile subjects, and in Paris they definitely expected something else. The German general in command of Paris had indeed issued a proclamation on Friday asking the Parisians to behave with dignity and calm. Paul opined there was plenty of calm but little dignity.

I said the Butte wasn't the place to form a judgment. Anyway, most of the inhabitants of Paris were away. I said that; but inside of me I was sick and hurt. Not only had *Marianne* let me down by losing the war, but was welcoming the enemy with a smile on her lips. Where was France? France seemed dead. In its place had come something no one ever imagined could exist on the soil of France. Then, to give me an even worse picture, Paul said there were Armistice negotiations afoot and soon the fighting, or whatever was left of it, would cease. It was terrible news, but the

first reaction was that in that case the Germans would leave Paris.

A German soldier opened the door and went out. I could hear the drone of a plane.

"*Ein Tommy*," the soldier said. Several of them went out. I went out, too. There was nothing to be seen; but there was hope in the drone of that plane. So I said to the German soldier: "Are you sure it's an English plane?" "Yes," he said. "*Ein Schpitfeuer*. I know their sound." Oh, that was good. So there still was somewhere an England. I'm a mildly good Catholic. That night I prayed for England, that she should hold out. I knew she would. I think I was at that time the only person in Paris who knew that. But France? Where was France? "God, she let me down," I said. I was wrong. It was France that had been let down by traitors, incompetence, and a perfectly corrupt system.

I didn't know that, but I was learning. My first long conversation with a German came quite soon. He was in the *Luftwaffe*, and in private life was an architect. He was from Berlin. We spoke in a bistro. He had been to Hungary and said he was fond of the Hungarians. I said I was a Hungarian, so the ice was broken and he answered my questions in detail. I had many to ask. First, the war. No, the French didn't fight well, but they were up against overwhelming odds from the start. Everything the German Army did was a surprise and was unexpected. All through history, he asserted, the Ardennes were the last place for the enemy to pass through. This time the German Army came across the Ardennes. Then they pushed immediately to the sea. In the last war there was the race to the sea after the battle of the Marne; this time they knew better. The main idea of the attack was based on the Schlieffen plan. It was the revolving door and this time the door revolved as it should. But as he wasn't a professional soldier I was more interested in his personal experiences. Though wearing the uniform of the *Luftwaffe*, during the battle of France he'd been with the infantry. He'd a deep grudge against the Moroccan troops.

"Do you know," he said, his face red, "there was a swine who tried to rise and crawl to his rifle after I put seven shots into him. But those swine weren't treated by us like prisoners. We shot them all. The Senegalese were just as bad." He also said that France was overrun by Niggers. The French race was gone on account of Niggers. Now Germany would purify the French race. France would be grateful to Germany in years to come. Without pausing, he went on to say that if the French thought by giving them a good

reception they wouldn't have to suffer then the French were greatly mistaken. I asked him about the Nazis. I said I've heard so much about them and hitherto had only seen Germans.

"You're quite right," he said. "To be a Nazi is to be a German. I've travelled a lot. I know the world, and I can assure you I was pretty sceptical about the *Partei*. Wait and see, I said. It was only in 1936 that I joined it because by then I realized that it was embodying all the fundamental German ideas. Then I joined it. I knew it was preparing Germany for the *Sieg* we now have." That was interesting, but it was what I expected. I inquired about *Weltanschauung*. What did it actually mean? He said it was looking at things from the German point of view. "But if you're not a German?" "Then you have either to give in or to learn your lesson. We offered France peace in October last. Now France is going to pay for having refused it." I nodded. Hitler's peace offer of October 1939 was now remembered by many Frenchmen. If only they'd accepted it, you heard right and left. It was to become a great German propaganda weapon. 'You see, France, we were willing to make peace with you, leave your frontiers unchanged; now we can take everything from you and you can only blame yourself for it.'

"We," the German was saying, "want to raise men to a high level. No more chasing after money, no wars, no . . ." "Sorry to butt in, but how would you stop war?" "We're going to give the world everlasting peace. Nobody will ever have the chance to start war again." "Here in France everybody thought the same after Versailles, and just look at the result." "We won't make the same mistake as the French and the English made. No fear of that." "What about England?" Whenever I put that question there was inward excitement in me. "England? She'll soon be finished. First we'll bomb her to smithereens, then we'll invade her. But I don't think that's necessary. They'll sue for peace once the *Luftwaffe* gets going. You don't know the strength of our air force. It's unbeatable." I saw before me burnt-up, peaceful English villages, thought of Macaulay's New Zealander, and felt heavy. I got the further information that the Führer was adored by all and sundry, Goering was immensely popular, though he for one would have preferred the Führer to have made Hess his immediate successor. Goebbels he disliked. I was to find out that practically every German adored Hitler, and I was to find out, too, that practically every German disliked Goebbels. Of Italy he had a poor opinion. *Macharonifressern*, he called them. According to him, Italy waited till she was sure that Germany had defeated France and only then dared to enter the fray. They were

a cowardly lot. He didn't believe in modern art. There were established traditions and those who didn't observe them were decadent. I asked what did he exactly mean by established traditions. His answer, more or less, amounted to the statement that it was whatsoever the Führer approved of. This from a positively intelligent, well-educated German of the upper middle classes. Paris was beautiful, but a lot should be altered. Women shouldn't have lipstick and rouge. A prostitute with most of the rouge and lipstick of this benighted world was in the bar, and he was looking at her all the time. Actually he departed with her.

But what interested me the most were his words about peace; for I, too, had spent two decades in listening to a lot of tosh about the Versailles Treaty. The General of the Police was to confirm his words. Here I must set the scene for him.

Several events led up to it. The first was the return of Joe and his family. The table had been lost on the road, but the family was intact. As numerous as before. Joe told me hair-raising stories of the road. They defy description. Millions on the road, derelict cars, prams, tables, family linen, lost children and the peasants asking ten francs for a glass of water, and anybody ready to make a present of his car provided you gave him enough petrol to reach the next town; and because you didn't have any petrol yourself cars and cars were left on the road. German planes overhead. The Germans didn't attack them. Orléans they bombed and killed thousands of refugees; but that was earlier. Joe told me how they met the Germans. A sad, moving story it was.

There they were on the road, the huge mass of them, advancing at snail's pace, and suddenly they heard hooting from behind. The thick crowd looked back and two armoured cars were coming up. Nobody, thought Joe, could get through that moving, living, thick forest. But the armoured cars meant business and the refugees pressed closer to each other and gave way. They saw unknown, outlandish uniforms, and a cheer went up. For they thought these were the English, their Allies, coming to help them. What a pathetic picture! When the armoured cars had advanced reasonably far, they stopped and an officer got out and in good French told the people to turn round and go back to Paris. Joe said that a German N.C.O. shouted to them, "*Nach* Paris." And the people of Paris obeyed the order and turned back to Paris. They were starving, the peasants wouldn't sell them anything. They didn't want French paper money any more. Joe had to concede that the farms near the road had been pilfered and even the potatoes torn from their roots. On their return march they met German troops, and the Germans

fed them. They could say nothing against the Germans. And, Joe added naïvely, the Germans said, whenever they gave them anything to eat, "You see, *Français*, how good we are to you; we're not your enemies, the English got you into this war. Take this crumb, too, and see how good we are to you."

"You see, sir," said Joe in conclusion, "I'm a simple man and I believed what the newspapers told me. I believed in the invincibility of our army. I believed the Germans cut off hands and poked out eyes, had no petrol and their tanks were of cardboard. And, of course, I believed only a small minority was with Hitler. Then a united nation beat us in a few weeks and fed us on the road where we were, because our government ran away, left chaos behind and deserted us completely. How could I ever believe in the Republic again? Why shouldn't I listen to the Germans? They, at least, have shown us they could achieve something. And you, the English? It's all your fault. For twenty years you helped the Germans. Whenever we wanted to take drastic measures you stopped us. When Weygand wanted to march into the Rhineland in '36 he only asked for six divisions; you stopped him. Now they're here and we must make the best of it."

"Come, Joe," I said, "had there been an energetic government in France and had it listened to Weygand, do you suppose the Home Fleet would have shelled Calais?" That was the only answer I could think of. It was lame in a way but the best in the circumstances. I knew better than Joe those who believed that Germany was saving the world from Communism, and in giving her a square deal; and those who disarmed and those who were the peacemakers. "I'm the last man, Joe, to defend the English politicians of the last ten years, but you must admit that Churchill and a few understood better than anybody else the German danger."

Joe brushed that aside. "Never mind, it's the fault of England. Power politics, Continental balance. A German officer told me that this morning. It's quite true." And once more in my life I marvelled at Continentals investing English politicians with much more astuteness than they possessed. But it came home to me that *perfide Albion* was on the map again. I argued for some time with Joe, but there was nothing doing with him. When I asked him who went in for Eastern European entanglements, France or England, he got irritated, and more or less told me to stop speaking of such matters.

"Don't upset things more than they are already upset," he said quite angrily. I made the mental comment that I must go warily. Frenchmen weren't in the mood to hear the truth. It

was bad enough for them to see one part of the truth stalking the streets.

That evening I went to the old man and his wife to hear the news. Apparently I was late because the news was over. It was difficult to get accustomed to German time, which the conqueror, disregarding all laws of nature, had imposed on Paris. The nine o'clock curfew started in broad daylight. The old man was sleeping, and she told me Reynaud had gone and Pétain had taken over. She was delighted about it and pointed at her sleeping husband and proudly said, "The maréchal is the same age as my husband. Just think of it." The old man was sleeping with his mouth open. Saliva was dripping down his parchment-covered chin, his closed eyes were wet, and dotard and second childhood were the labels of his drooping head. Poor France, was all I could think. Nevertheless Pétain was the victor of Verdun, he came from the Pas de Calais, he would never accept infamous conditions. Once more I was thinking the thought of most Frenchmen.

And now comes the general. The general came to the Butte on the crest of the German victory wave, which was taking on tremendous proportions with wine, women and song.

It was morning, the weather was still fine and Dodo and I went to Joe's. A German military car stood outside. The chauffeur wore S.S. uniform. Inside, two Germans were sitting. One in uniform, the other in mufti. They'd a bottle of Mirabelle on the table. The officer's face was flushed. I walked to the bar and Joe made me a sign with his eye, which I failed to understand. Then I heard the officer say in a loud German voice, "We'll take him along." That sounded Greek to me. Take whom along and where to? I sat on the bar-stool with my back to them. After a little while the officer belched and repeated that this one would be taken along. The civilian said that first we must see. The officer belched again, and then spoke in a loud voice: "Hey, you! You Intelligence Service, what?"

It was rotten English and there was no doubt he was speaking to me. Whereupon I made a mistake. I answered in German. "You can speak to me in German," I said. "Ha," he said, "I expected you'd speak German. You all speak German." They both got up and came to me. The civilian was on my right and from the left the general poked his face close to mine. It was a brutal, reddish face. A face you fear at sight. A face that's capable of anything. By anything I mean nothing good.

"Intelligence Service," the face said. It was hardly an inch away.

"What are you talking of," I said in the indignant voice motorists use when a policeman stops them for exceeding the speed limit. "Who are you?" the civilian asked in a pleasant voice. That and the Mirabelle made the face impatient. "We'll take him along," it stated.

The civilian said in an aside to him that first they should find out who I was. So he asked me again who I was.

"I'm a Hungarian living here in Paris," I said, still in the motorist voice.

"Show me your identity papers," the face said.

"I don't see why I should," I answered, speaking to the civilian.

"He's a *General der Polizei*," the civilian said. So I took out my passport and my *carte d'identité*, and looking at my photograph the Mirabelle-sodden eyes of the general discovered no likeness.

"This isn't you," he said. The civilian, however, affirmed it was me. The general changed his tactics and told Joe, who was frightened and worried on my account, to give me a drink. Then he spoke of me to his friend as though I wasn't there sitting between the two of them. A very unpleasant experience. He contended that Hungarians hadn't blue eyes, nor were they very tall and even if I were a Hungarian, what was I doing in Paris that had fought Germany?

"There are many Hungarians living here," I said.

"Oh, really," he said. "How interesting."

He poked his face nearer and his eyes held my gaze, and whilst they held it the ludicrous thought came to me that this man must have read my novel, *Children, My Children*, in which I didn't speak too flatteringly of the Germans of the last war. This only shows the sort of notions that come to you under the influence of such a gaze. "Barman, give him another." No, it wasn't pleasant.

A friend of Mrs. Joe's arrived. She was a good looking woman, and the general relinquished his seat and started to make advances to her. Drinks all round he ordered.

"What's the matter with him? I asked the civilian, now that we were alone at the bar. The civilian said, "He's a very good man. My best friend. He's the right hand of *Aussenminister* von Ribbentrop." That very good man was talking of peace. He drank a toast to peace and said "*Friede*" several times. There was going to be unbroken peace as long as the world lasted. Germany would see to that. He laughed a cruel laugh and clenched his fist and then opened it again to raise his glass. He said "*Friede*." I never knew anybody could be so bloodthirsty about peace.

He asked Mrs. Joe's friend to sleep with him. He offered her a hundred occupation marks, which was a lot of money for a poor Frenchwoman. She blushed and moved away. Very unfortunate, because the general's interest focused once more on me. This time he contended that I was a member of the *Deuxième Bureau* and that I was spying on him. His eyes bored into mine and he said he'd seen me before. Then he asked brusquely why was I staring at him. He would take me along. But Mrs. Joe's friend was still in the room. So before taking me along he advanced towards her, offering her the money without any services in return that she and her children should always remember the kind German he was. That nearly made him sob.

Meanwhile his friend was asking me what the French thought of the Germans. I said the French were stunned. He thought the French liked the Germans on account of the Germans' excellent behaviour in Paris and in other occupied towns. "There won't be any ill-feeling left on the part of the French," he declared.

"I'm sure they won't want a *revanche*. We're very careful to make them like us." That man absolutely believed in eating his cake and keeping it. But I wondered why he should bother about French *revanche* with France prostrate as she was.

The friend of Mrs. Joe accepted the money, though for a long time she really didn't want to take it. Her husband was a prisoner of war and she was alone with her two children. She was afraid that taking that sum would put her under an obligation and, having put the money carefully into her bag, took French leave. The general returned to the bar and listened to me. I was telling his friend that the French, fundamentally, disliked strangers, so why should the Germans hope for better treatment? That was, in a sense, not a nice thing for me to say. I knew from personal experience, having been in France, on and off, all my life, that the French are much too kind to strangers; and think of the deadweight of all the undesirable foreigners that France kept! But some way or other I wanted to shake that man's conceit. That was the nearest approach to it. The general's face was coming closer and closer. Then Joe, in order to make a diversion, asked what about Russia? The general opened his palm and closed it. "We have Stalin here," he said. "He's eating out of our hand."

Abruptly he told me to write my name into his notebook. He'd find out who I was. He gave me his notebook, but immediately returned it into his pocket and walked to the wall. He walked quickly; and no wonder. Taking the wall as a target the *General der Polizei*, Ribbentrop's right hand, spewed against the wall. He was

thoroughly sick. In the pandemonium that followed I walked out of the bar.

Joe afterwards told me he'd been panicky all the time expecting the general to take me away, and that, said Joe, would have been terrible. The general's face had said so.

I've often been asked who the general was—I don't know. The foregoing proves, I believe, that I wasn't quite in the position to ask him questions. Subsequently, I saw a photograph of Heydrich, the man who endeared himself with the Czechs. His face resembled the face of the general. None the less, I wouldn't swear it was he.

In the afternoon of the same day the beanfeast of the victor was going from strength to strength. Wholesale drunkenness settled down on the Butte. Officers and men reeled, tumbled and sang. I, who knew Paris pretty well, was astonished at the quantity of prostitutes. It was the same with the quality. Nona, Paul and I sat under one of the *Mère Cathérine's* umbrellas and Nona agreed with me that it was a comic sight to see the Spartan army instead of letting itself be bitten by the fox-cub (a despicable habit and the cause of all evil), outdoing the Athenians in drink and revelry. Mars showing the great god Pan of what stuff the vine is. In that rolling rollicking tumult I overheard a remark. It was made by a comparatively sober German officer. The scholarly German with pince-nez and *Forschung* written over him. He was sitting at the next table drinking beer, black coffee and Benedictine. The German stomach is amazing. A young lieutenant stopped at his table and reminded him they'd met in Brussels the last time. Both were full of beans and the lieutenant playfully asked the scholarly one where else would they meet in the near future. The scholarly one said that in a week in London and in a fortnight in New York. Both laughed, that's true. It wasn't, however, incredulous laughter. The laughter implied that naturally a week and a fortnight were a bit of a joke, but eventually they'd meet in both towns.

"Why doesn't America wake up?" I said to Nona. "Can't you see that you're in the frying-pan with England?"

"I can," Nona said, "but most Americans have never heard of Europe."

The scholarly one looked up. Ah, his pince-nez registered, this is English! He left it at that. They usually left it at that.

In the evening I carefully observed the curfew and sat with Dodo and the puppies. Their eyes were open. Blue they were; with innocent hope they contemplated a fresh new world. A slipper, the edge of a carpet, the ringing of the bell, my movements, were new, miraculous. I could have wept because they hoped, and pitied

them because they didn't know that eighty million Antichrists were taking the freshness off the world they so very much wanted to sample. Towards ten Paul came saying he had been thrown out of his hotel, which was taken over by the Germans. Could he sleep in my flat? I looked at the toad and said yes. I'm sorry, but I'm made that way. We sat drinking red wine and Paul said England was finished. Her end had come. *Finis Angliae*, he said. I said, never. He said it was ridiculous to be attached to a lost cause, especially as the cause didn't belong to me. I said I was no man of property, and then we listened to the noise on the stairs.

Since the concierge was still away the door was still ajar. Apparently, German soldiers decided that the dark staircase on the other side of the inviting open door was the ideal spot for cheap love. Their heavy boots crunched up and down the stairs. Their drunken laughter was now and then interrupted by the shrieks and cursing of the women. From those noises it was easy to reach the conclusion that ten or so soldiers would come into the house at a time. With one woman for the whole lot of them, and after noisy, drunken love-making, they would refuse to pay her. The woman shrieked and cursed, and the soldiers, losing their tempers, struck her.

One woman was genuinely beaten up. That was after midnight. The episode took place on the landing outside my flat. Having satisfied the desires of her heavy-booted clients, she asked for money. A soldier said no. The poor creature explained that *ici en France* a woman got paid for that. The Germans answered she was no longer in France, she was in Germany. His companions guffawed and they began to go down the stairs. I think she tried to stop them. I don't know. Anyway, they gave her a terrific hiding and because now she shrieked *sale Boche* she was beaten harder. In a book for boys I would have rushed to her help. I didn't. What I did was to tell Dodo to be quiet, for she was barking and whining and looked wretched. That sort of thing went on the whole night. Paul said *finis Angliae*. I said, never. In the morning the stairs and entrance hall were in a disgusting state. The vases on the landings were knocked down. The old man's wife was shivering on the landing fearing it would be next time the turn of her jewels.

To be fair to the Germans I must state that in the first two months they were generous with women. I heard a prostitute saying at the *Choppe* that during the first week-end of the occupation she made nearly twenty thousand francs. It seems I caught them that night a little off-stage and away from their propaganda instructions. That's all.

I was through. The filthy stairs, the roaring planes, the memory of those shrieks, were too much of a good thing. Though I came down early, German cars were already outside the bars. Beer had been exhausted as the Germans drank all that was to be had and the breweries didn't deliver new stock. So the Germans went in for wine and pernod and got mad drunk. You could see that early in the morning. I told Paul he could stay with the canaries, of which but few were left. That smoky day before the advent of the Hun had killed off most of them. A token of the changing times, for canaries belong to Paris like the military review of the *quatorze juillet*. I put the puppies into a basket and, dangling the basket in one hand and holding Dodo's leash in the other, I went off to stay with friends far from the Butte. Those friends lived in the *XVIe arrondissement*, and round there only very few Germans were to be seen. There was perfect quiet and the house had a garden and the puppies crawled about in the sun. Rarely a few boots passed outside. There was no doubt about it, the Germans had chosen the Butte as their favourite recreation ground. I suppose it was the name of Montmartre and the trees and tables. The latter must have reminded them in a far-away fashion of their beer-gardens. However that may be, the Butte of Montmartre remained the place where the most Germans were to be found during summer, and in the autumn too.

I did a lot of thinking in the next few days. The fact was before me that I was completely cut off from England and she was but a memory of yesterday and of the day before. I asked myself earnestly whether my faith in English resistance was built on the same elusive sands on which the fortress of France had stood. I didn't want to be hurt and disappointed again, and I had to argue it out with myself. England had been my spiritual background since my childhood. That said nothing. It only accounted for my loyalty. But there was my loyalty to France too, and that had kept me on in Paris and had made me blind. But there was English history which had been a rising tide ever since Henry VII, and there was the Armada, the Dutch sailing up the Thames, and Bony's plans of invasion. They all failed. Would this one, the most dangerous of them all, fail too? It was no good, I sadly admitted, to go to history for comfort. French history was full of shining lights and comfort and look, just look. But there was the great difference: the English now knew they were in mortal danger and because I know myself I knew the English would fight. They wouldn't capitulate. But could England win? There were the resources of the British Empire. They were

immense, but was there time for them to put their weight into the scale? Everything depended on time. Every day the Germans postponed their attack was a day won for England. It was for time, then, that I had to pray, for if time turned against that now so lonely England the light would go out of the world for centuries.

It was terrible to face a reality in which the proudest empire was in such imminent danger. Britannia so staunch and so complacently ruling the waves had become overnight the damsel in distress. Great Britain, so full of might, was now a lone little island awaiting an onslaught against which only her decency was the armour. For in the affairs of this world England had been decent, and though she conquered and ate a lot there was humaneness and Christian value in her conquests and repasts. She hadn't to be ashamed of her past. On the contrary, she had produced some of the finest days in history. But, fundamentally, I didn't think too much of that. It was with me a matter of feeling and not of logical conclusions. My love for England could have been called but a little while ago an opportune love. Now it was turning into quixotic love.

That made me shudder. Was I, even I, preparing the tears of the mourner? I concentrated on more cheerful matters. The greatness of England had been made by adventurers and now she'd nearly lost it through mediocrity, and its sister, red tape. But those of the past were adventurers in the proper sense of the word. Men who braved adventure, sought it, feared it not, and got the better of it. The Drakes, the Raleighs, the Nelsons, made her. And now, only just not too late, there was again a man of adventure at the head of England—Mr. Churchill—whose books I knew, whose speeches I'd read and in whom I believed during the years he cried in the Baldwin-Chamberlain-created wilderness, where the trees of strength were conspicuous by their absence.

Yes, I said, Churchill stood for the real English spirit, not the trips to Munich. And that spirit was England, only please God give her time. Every day counts. That time factor became an obsession with me and every day was a victory for me on the road to victory. As long as the clock ticked there was hope. I reviewed my position, too, and it was a bitter thought for me to be in Paris while England was half an inch from her grave. As long as it had seemed plain sailing it wasn't my business, but I'd no illusions that if the burial ever took place I should be miserable if left out of it. But what could I do? In what manner could I be of service to her? I couldn't see clearly.

During those days I read an article in an American magazine. It was in *Collier's Magazine*, I believe. It was about German propaganda methods. It described at some length the so-called whispering propaganda the Germans used in Paris before the war. Very interesting it was, and there, for the first time, I read the name of Otto Abetz. He'd been the head of the whispering propaganda. The French Government expelled him from France. That article mentioned that when the Germans were near Warsaw and the town was on its last legs, the Fifth Column had spread the rumour that Italy had come in on the Allied side and English troops had landed in Poland. As I saw the same thing in Paris, I had to admit the author knew what he was writing about. Undoubtedly food for thought.

It came back to me that a Frenchman of rather dubious origin had told me during the Spring crisis of 1939 that French soldiers were deserting at the Italian frontier. It was too ludicrous for words. I told him so. Was that the sort of thing the article was about? Or, during the last summer, when I was told that one of the largest forests of France was burning and like this would the Germans conquer France. Demolishing everything without war. Was that the same sort of thing? Yes, there was plenty of food for thought.

I went for a walk with Dodo down to the Trocadéro. Plenty of Germans. We went into a bar for a drink and the owner said, "You're English; get out, I won't serve you. You English got us into this war and you're responsible for our downfall." We mildly walked out. I'd no longer any doubt that a hatred of England would sweep the country. I couldn't but smile at the idea that it would be a poor sort of joke if I, the Hungarian, were lynched for being an Englishman.

But to counteract my romantic thoughts I ran into an old French friend of mine who said he couldn't sleep at night, and now his only hope was that England would resist. But—he shook his head—with what? With the material England lost in Flanders? I pointed out to him that the British Empire was immense and even if England were occupied the war would go on, from Canada, from Australia, from the last island rock at the end of the ocean.

"We were going to fight from Martinique," he said. I said I'd just been kicked out of a bar because I was taken to be English.

"England, the scapegoat," he said. "Don't forget after defeat one looks for a scapegoat and for the anti-English feeling that is bound to rise bad English propaganda is responsible. I should say the lack of English propaganda is responsible. The average Frenchman knows nothing about England, so now he'll believe the Boche.

Two countries whose interest, life and future were so completely interwoven and none of them took the trouble to know the other. *All I should* know about England as an educated Frenchman is the positive anti-English tendency of late nineteenth century French literature and the translated works of Oscar Wilde whom the English put in jail. For some obscure reason, since the last war England's immense sacrifice of over a million lives had been passed over. The English never bothered to mention it. The French, despite their large seaboard, are an inland nation. They never appreciated, because they didn't understand it, the English Navy's effort in the last war and, of course, England didn't trouble to point it out. You know, and I know, that Churchill had always been a loyal friend of France, a lover of France, but now the Boche is going to tell the people that England is run by the monster Churchill and the City of London and they're going to believe him. Yet our only salvation is English victory. I hardly dare to hope for it." Thus spoke the Frenchman. He was a nice chap, the scion of the small nobility, and lived somewhere around the Plaine Monceau, and read and thought a lot. He was twice wounded in the last war, then held a government appointment but had relinquished it years ago. Before he left me he said he was ashamed of being a Frenchman of 1940, and when we parted he patted Dodo and with a sad smile said, "*Pauvre petite Ecossaise, on va se battre dans tes collines.*" Dodo wagged her tail that said 'let 'em come'.

The papers were appearing again. First came *Le Matin*, which became the official German newspaper. The second or third day of its reappearance there was in it a letter to the editor that made me gasp. The letter began thus: "The English have given us their best troops and all their material. They gave it without a murmur and let us command those troops and use the material as we thought fit. What have we given in return? We gave them Gamelin! That was all we could produce." The editor added that many similar letters had reached him. For the life of me I shall never understand how that letter got published in *Le Matin*, the official German paper. My only lame explanation is that the editor was so glad to be rid of a censorship that had boosted Gamelin sky high that he took this first opportunity to hit at the late regime through the person of the late *Généralissime*. I can find no other explanation, especially as next day the paper said that English planes had dropped bombs on Arras, and it would be pretty hard to explain to the peasants who had been killed by the bombs, that England was supposed to be France's ally and what could the poor peasant think

if he remembered that the King of England had been so well received in Paris when he paid a visit of state in 1938? I think it was in that number that I read Mr. Churchill's splendid offer to France to unite with Britain.

German military police had arrived in Paris. I spoke to one of them near their hotel in the rue Lauriston. He said they were specially trained men for duties in Paris. They'd been waiting in Aix-la-Chapelle the whole winter. Now there would be order in Paris. The Führer didn't want his troops to get unfit for fighting against England. Dear me, I thought, so prostitutes, pernod and wine were England's Fifth Column. (They were an excellent Fifth Column.) Indeed, the policeman went on, there must be discipline. Soldiers should remain in fighting trim, and Paris life wasn't good for that. He was half drunk, so I didn't quite know what he was referring to. He also said the Maréchal had refused to sign the armistice.

There seemed to be some delay about the armistice. The radio had warned French troops not to let Germans approach them with white flags of truce. The war was still on. A friend of my friend's came with the news that Germany's condition was that France should join Germany in her fight against England. I said that was a preposterous and idiotic rumour. I suppose it was at the time, but for once a canard was well ahead of truth.

Next day the armistice was signed. Everybody thought it meant the Germans would go. When they saw it wasn't so, quite a few people I spoke to bitterly regretted the armistice. But that bitterness went, for the Germans were so correct and the returning refugees had only praise for them. Moreover, it wasn't so bad to be without a French Government for a time. That feeling was shared by many. There is a moral to that. Corruption and petty, endless tyranny, coupled with eternal red tape, can make even the enemy a pleasant change. Hideous to prefer the enemy even for a moment; I couldn't; but I'm recording facts. The French soul is sensitive, that's a fact, too. It was for them revolting to remember all that, the more so if they considered the late government's results in other fields. The battlefield was one of them.

The exact terms of the armistice were never divulged. There were many rumours, but none was actually confirmed by those in the know. Those in the know knew as little as the rumour-mongers. I know, though, there was a tricky paragraph in it, to say the least. Paragraph 18, if my memory is as good as I think it is.

If German soldiers stationed, let's say, at Saint-Cloud, felt that going to a brothel in town was too long a journey and had a brothel

mounted near their billets, then the town of Paris paid for it under Paragraph 18. The town paid for the renovation of that luxurious establishment, the Sphinx, under the same paragraph. In August, when the Germans at the Hotel de Ville organized the anti-Freemason exhibition, the same paragraph was responsible for the six hundred thousand francs the removal of the incriminating documents entailed. This is a fact. A smoke-screen must rest on my accurate informer.

The armistice talks were carried out, as is well known, under cheap cinema conditions in Foch's sleeper, the same forest, the same rails. A friend of General Huntzinger told me that the German generals received him icily and Hitler was trying to be similarly icy, but didn't quite succeed: he was flushed and excited. The Germans made the French feel as abashed as possible. After the armistice was signed the Führer made France a present of Foch's statue, a gesture that once more showed that Hitler's generosity has no limits.

Well, in the world around me war was over. And I returned to the Butte. Nona had come to tell me that it was said on the Butte that I ran away from the Germans because I was English and afraid. I saw myself under that tree and the old women would march past and spit at any moment. So I took the basketful of puppies in one hand, Dodo's leash in the other, and back we went. The puppies were growing at such speed that the basket was now much heavier than it had been when we came.

Nothing had changed on the Butte. The Germans were still all over the place, and drunkenness was still holding its own. The curfew had been extended to ten o'clock. Another gesture of the Führer.

A PAINTER AND HIS TIMES

CHAPTER FOUR

My private affairs intruded upon my mourning for France and counting the hours for England. My last few hundred francs were going—very much the last. To be cut off from my publishers and the magazines I contributed to meant starvation. Almost all the people whose financial roots were on the other side of the Channel or of the Atlantic were in the same boat. There was Mr. Squibb, the millionaire, who was without money too. Nona couldn't get her income from America either. A perfect blank was ahead of me and I didn't know what to do.

Paul was staying with me. He slept in a deck-chair in the entrance hall; accurately speaking, he rarely slept there. He would return drunk, with much difficulty would rig up the chair, then with a sigh of relief he would lay down on the floor beside it. He was a silent guest, and in the morning would usually be gone before I got up. We were quite an assembly to spend my last hundred francs, but a sort of windfall came my way. I sold two puppies. One of them was Pontoise. A third puppy I gave to Marthe, the *serveuse* of the *Mère Cathérine*, because she fed Dodo, and Cooky the puppy, from whom I wouldn't part. The situation was slightly better, though penury remained this side of the corner.

Paris had discovered that it spoke German remarkably well. Shops and restaurants proclaimed it. One said *man spricht Deutsch*, the other said *der Wirt spricht Deutsch*, the third said *da wird Deutsch gesprochen*. There was a notice on the wall of a large restaurant that ten per cent reduction on all prices was awaiting inside their *beliebte* German clientèle. The Germans were advertising for guides in the papers. An incredible number of people were discovered to suit their requirements and a host of guides appeared, which included German refugees; a surprising feature that. Many Alsatians filled that job, which meant taking the German soldiers round Paris and explaining the sights to them.

I knew one guide quite well. He was from Mulhouse. He used to represent in Paris a firm of Alsatian wine merchants. Now Alsace, like Lorraine, was cut from the rest of France. So he marched down the rue Lepic with German soldiers and received for a day about one hundred francs. It was he who made the rather witty remark to me that Alsace was the saddest country in the world, for she won every war.

He told me the Germans viewed the sightseeing high-spots of Paris with awe and respect. If you told them that any hovel had harboured at one time or other some famous poet or general they gazed at it respectfully and said it was *wunderschön*. That sort of experience had come my way, too. I was stopped near the Church Saint-Pierre by a German private. In a serious voice he asked me if it was of the Butte that Puccini wrote *Die Boheme*. I could have pointed out to him that it wasn't written by Puccini, and it was about the Quartier Latin. But he was so earnest about it and was looking so seriously forward to *Kultur* pleasure, that I pointed to the house opposite and said Mimi had lived and died in that house. He considered that too marvellous for words. He gazed at it from every angle and photographed it from every angle, too. He asked for details and I gave them readily. I showed him her window and explained her cough could be heard from that side street over there. So he explored the street too. It wasn't really ridiculous. As I watched his pleasure-sodden face I reflected that it was a pity that war, world conquest and cunning bestiality had been planted into the Germanic soul, which was just as ready to gaze at a window whence the cough of the heroine of an opera was supposed to have come.

I was finding out a lot about Germans from other quarters, too. The *Paris Soir* was out again, controlled by the Germans. Paul was back at the paper, and with his first two articles he definitely tied the rope round his neck. The rope of the revenge that some day must come. In those articles he praised the Germans as masters of manners and so superior to the tourists France had seen in the past. But that is by the way. What interested me was that he was in touch at the office with the German officials and officers who ran the paper. In the evenings he gave me a gist of the day's happenings at the paper and at German headquarters. Nobody cared those days about my hearing the little stories. I was but a harmless anachronism on two legs.

The Germans didn't know what to do with Paris. It was too large a nut for them and they were still stunned by their quick success. In Poland it had been simpler and suited their nature: to kill off the population, to torture it. But here was a different problem. It was a new one; and it takes the German a certain amount of time to master new problems. True, once he masters it he's pretty efficient. But the greatest problem of France's new rulers was how to make themselves liked. They were in a quandary. Paul said Hitler wanted to make peace with England. The cutting-up of the French empire could solve many temporary problems. Actually, that

dreamt of, would follow. The Germans had worked for twenty years, now let the French work for the next hundred years. An S.S. officer, who was drinking at the bar in the company of a private, joined in. In his view it was very fine to live as luxuriously as the French had lived, but that wasn't the right thing to do. Life wasn't meant for that. "Really," I said, "so you don't believe in a high standard of living? I thought that one of the reasons Germany was waging war was that she wanted to live well, too." "We weren't speaking of Germany," he said. "We were speaking of the French."

You couldn't reason with them. There was one law, one moral principle for them and another for the French and the rest of the world. That point of view was put to me even more clearly by a young soldier from the Sudetenland. He came into *Joe's* when I was with Nona and Robert and Pedro. We talked and he asked his innumerable questions, and was horrified to find out that in our small party there was an American, a Spaniard and a Hungarian.

"This is all wrong," he exclaimed. "All these different nationalities. People should stay in their own countries." I smiled. "So nobody should travel! You want to stop travelling. Everybody to stay at home, what?" "You'll see the Führer will stop it." "But, of course, when we all stay in our respective countries there will be only the Germans who'll travel, what?" "Naturally. We worked for that. Now we're fighting for that." He was a kindly fellow and he offered me a Woodbine. Then he said in a commiserating voice, "What a pity for you that you aren't a German."

But my finances were again overshadowing everything else. No puppies left to sell and, which was much worse, Dodo was getting sick. I took her to the nearest vet. He said there was nothing serious the matter with her, but she must take medicine because she had a sort of infection. A new drain on my empty purse. I got the medicine and it made Dodo sadder. She wore a shroud of sadness.

It was getting on towards evening, and with hoots and raking up the dust German cars were coming up. German soldiers were walking about with their cameras, and a great mob of hawkers were selling them postcards, water-colours, tin Eiffel Towers and other souvenirs. The Germans were industriously buying. I sat with Nona and Robert, who was beginning to like the Germans. He admired their manners. The stiff Prussian politeness appealed to him. The way they clicked their heels, bowed to each other before raising their glasses, and their courteous treatment of the defeated. There was something to be said for the latter. I'd seen a party of German officers sitting outside the *Cadet de Gascogne*, and a French-

woman, driven by sorrow, go up to their table and spit at them, shouting—"You killed my brother, you swine." I thought the Germans would shoot her. Their posters said that any offence against the *Wehrmacht* would be followed by drastic measures. Death would be the lightest penalty. But one of the German officers only said: "Madamay, you're excited, you don't know what you're doing." And he motioned to a *serveuse* to lead the woman away. The fact was that the Germans were behaving well and were lavish with their money. Many Frenchmen said that they in the Rhineland had behaved worse. But I, to whom the Germans spoke more frankly of their ultimate designs, was well aware there was a catch in it. I said so.

"You're still thinking of your dead past," Robert said. "Forget it. You could go to America. They publish books in the same language."

I didn't think of my books; they belonged to the dead past. As we talked there came a voice from behind, begging our pardon in gutturals. A German soldier was standing there, surrounded by two comrades: he looked young. I said I spoke German, and what was it he wanted? He pointed at Robert's beard and asked if the gentleman was a French painter. I said he was. That made him innocently jubilant, and he turned to his companions and said, you see, I was right. Then he explained to me he was a painter, too, he was from Dresden, and it gave him a great thrill to be able to see a real French painter at close range. I was moved by his naïve delight. He took out his cigarette-case and offered us cigarettes. Robert lit a match, but simultaneously one of his comrades produced a lighter. He refused the light from the lighter and accepted Robert's match, saying in an aside to his companions how he would remember all his life that a genuine French painter had given him a light.

Robert's studio was near, so I suggested to him to have a look at his paintings. Apart from my interest in that nice soldier, it occurred to me that perhaps he might want to buy a painting, and with his Maecenas gone and art dealers away Robert was more broke than I. The soldier gladly accepted the invitation, and we went to the *atelier*. Robert's paintings were everything the German mind disliked. I watched the soldier as he looked at them. He was awed, didn't understand them, but put it down as his own fault and not as the fault of the painter.

"It's a pity," he sighed, "that we in Germany aren't allowed to see such pictures. Our government has its own ideas about painting, and we must adhere to them." "There you are," I said. "Yet you must

admit that these are good paintings and it's your loss if you can't enjoy them." He sighed, and, dropping his voice, said it was a sad thing if the government interfered with your personal likes and dislikes. He spoke as if he were speaking of hail or wind. They're there; and one must accept them without even the suspicion of revolt. He asked permission to photograph a painting or two, and then asked Robert if he hadn't some small painting, preferably an aquarel, and more preferably an aquarel of one of the sights of Montmartre, because he'd buy that. No, Robert hadn't. The soldier went, and before going told us that this had been one of the finest moments of his life.

It began with that. Nona said Robert could sell as many small paintings as he wanted if he made them palatable for the German tourist. Robert said that was quite probable, but who would sell them? They said it could only be me since I spoke German and seemed to get on well with them. I said that was a silly joke and I would never sell anything and I wouldn't anyway take German money. They inquired if starvation were more dignified, and what about Dodo's medicine, and we all had to live. The argument raged for several days, and eventually I gave in. There was no choice.

I was brought up in an old-fashioned way. In a sense it was a ludicrous education. Hence for me to sell water-colours or anything else seemed a terrible thing. Then came a day when neither Nona nor I had luncheon; not even a sandwich. She could have gone to eat with her mother, but there wasn't enough money for the *métro* fare. That day Robert had finished two small water-colours, one of the Sacré-Cœur and the other of the Place du Tertre; charming little things they were. If you're an artist, the artist in you will out whatever you do. He made folders for them and they looked well. Robert wanted me to ask fifty francs for each and we should go half-and-half. He would have given me the three-quarters just to induce me to sell them. But I said no, I'd ask a hundred francs for each. Robert thought I was mad, but I pointed out to him that my impression of the Germans was that they had to be impressed if you wanted to succeed with them. Look at Hitler, who asked a high entrance fee at the Sportspalast in Berlin and that made the Germans look up and attend his meetings. Robert was incredulous, but I took the two water-colours and sold them at *Joe's* the same morning. My profit on each picture was forty francs, and in the six following weeks I sold one hundred and ten of them.

Quite a feat if you consider the price, the hawkers, vendors and painters outside on the square and in the restaurants. Twenty francs

was their usual price and there were positively hundreds who were trying to sell pictures. For most people in Paris were in the same boat as Robert and I. No means of making money, so only the Germans remained. I remember a painter who used to sit outside *Joe's Bar* the whole day, and his pretty sister raced from table to table trying to sell his sights of Paris. They never reached my record. There were men who'd been hawkers all their lives, yet their sales were behind mine, both in quality and quantity. I think I'm quite proud of my achievement, especially if I consider that the heavy professionals of pre-war Montparnasse came over to sell their stuff on the Butte. The Germans didn't care for Montparnasse. The Butte was their love. As I've said, they loved sitting in the open; gardens and moving, swaying crowds with trees around them were a continuous reminder of the Fatherland. They were homesick in Paris for the Fatherland which they expected to see again covered with glory after the defeat of the *verdammten Engländer*.

In the beginning I said: "These are the paintings of a friend of mine." Later we changed tactics, and I said I was the painter. That went down better and I, *der Montmartre Maler*, was respectfully called *Herr Kunstmaler*. I didn't let my old Victorian nanny down. I sold the pictures in an aloof way. I sat the whole day at the bar at *Joe's*. Whenever a German came in who looked a likely customer (after a little practice you detect the would-be customer rather easily), I engaged him in conversation and after a while mentioned that I was a painter and, by the way, here are a few of my paintings. So there was nothing of the vendor about me, and after a little experience I managed to turn the conversation into the channel at the end of which were the water-colours. It was a dignified procedure; but only outwardly. Inside of me I sweated and trembled, and Robert used to say that he invariably knew whether I'd been engaged in selling by the pallor of my face. It was not in my nature, and it was a terrible business. But I kept seven people alive: Nona, Dodo, Cooky, Paul, Robert, his fiancée and myself. It was trading with the enemy. I'm not ashamed of it.

Experience taught me a lot. I found out that water-colours of the Butte weren't enough. They wanted Notre Dame, the Madeleine, the Opera House and other stone celebrities. Robert shuddered at the thought. But he was game and bought coloured picture post-cards and used them as models. The Germans would look at the Notre Dame and ask me from which angle I'd painted it. Or they would argue about the colouring of the Opera House. The most amusing was when I was asked to autograph the pictures and put the

date on them, too. I readily complied. Now and then I was asked whether my paintings hung at the Salon. With a modest smile I nodded and said yes. I figured out since then that roughly speaking every eleventh German bought a water-colour. As their sales were over one hundred and ten, it's clear that I must have spoken to more than a thousand Germans. I can assert they have very little knowledge or feeling for art. That wouldn't be so bad, but in their German way they believed they knew everything about it. After the first few days I was compelled to tell Robert to use more vivid colours because the customers objected to too much white in his pictures. With all that white paper they must have imagined they weren't getting their money's worth. Grey, as a colour, was taboo: probably because it reminded them too much of their uniform. They believed in drawing. Their favourite was the Madeleine. I sold about twenty Madeleines to them. Their next favourite was the Dome des Invalides. Pity one couldn't paint Napoleon's tomb on the top of the Dome. Then there was a little becoming ensemble with Notre Dame, a tug, a barge and a bridge. That was a best-seller too. Many of the Huns got so enthusiastic about my painting that they told me they would buy one of my large paintings when they returned from England. Some of them said 'if'; most of them only used 'when'. I used to send up silent prayers that Robert's oil paintings should remain unsold.

They had no taste but respected art and the artist. It didn't matter to them that the artist was obviously poor. I received even from the crudest private the respect any famous artist would be satisfied with in the Western Democracies. No facetious remarks about art and the artist compared to genuine honest work. To be candid I missed those remarks. There were exceptions who understood modern painting. We had a small collection for them. Of that collection only seven sold in six weeks.

There came one day a certain Count Metternich, the head of the military art propaganda department or whatever it was. He was a fine aristocratic-looking man, with a small black moustache, and reminding you very much of the days before Germany started consciously to destroy the world. He was the fountain-head of German co-ordinated military artistic aspirations. He bought a terrible water-colour of the Place de la Concorde. One of the worst. That rather shows, I thought. Later, I found out that the Count's real job was to buy up paintings, the work of the despised Impressionists and post-Impressionists, and sell them abroad for the even more despised plutocratic gold.

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The great advantage of my new life was that since I was a painter in their eyes they stopped asking their eternal question what I was doing in Paris. Paris was the town of arts; hence it was meet and proper for a painter to live in Paris. But I could ask questions, and learned a lot.

The first thing they taught me was that they should never be trusted. They either bought on the spot or promised to come back next day. They never came back next day. A German, I found out, didn't keep an appointment on principle. The Führer was only expressing popular thought when he invaded Bohemia after having said at Munich he had no further claims and aims in Europe.

They never said no and when they didn't want to buy they made a date with me for next day. The French long ago discovered that there were no *revenants*. I positively know there were none among the Germans. It is, however, in every sense to their credit that among my buyers there were a certain proportion of privates. By buying a water-colour they spent at least three days' pay.

There came one day in July a young private. He bought a Madeleine and said he'd fetch it the following Sunday because he didn't want to crumple it, for he wasn't going to his billets straightway. He never came back for it. Maybe it's still there on the counter waiting for him. But it was good propaganda. Joe had to admit Germans weren't immortal. I contended that surely English parachutists had killed him—a story nobody could disprove.

So for six weeks we ate and drank on Robert's little pictures and I found out what I wanted to find out. At least, so I think.

My first substantial client was my lieutenant-colonel. That's how I think of him. He was a fine man. He was a Prussian, a soldier in every sense. He'd served, he said, the King of Prussia, the Weimar Republic, and now the Third Reich. He'd been on horseback last war as far as Senlis, now he was in Paris, brought along in an armoured car. That was, somehow, the only difference. To him this war was but a continuation of the last war. He was a staff officer, so when the Armistice of 1918 came and the republicans immediately appealed to the High Command to keep order, he knew it was but a matter of time for the offensive to start again: the High Command had been saved. The Kaiser could go, but as long as the staff was saved Germany's future was all right. He felt grateful to the men of Weimar: they had prepared the ground for all this. They were democrats and socialists, but they were fundamentally Germans, therefore believed in the German dream.

"When," he said, "in 1918 the High Command saw that the situation was no longer *günstig* for the continuation of the offensive,

they made a favourable armistice. It was favourable because the army was saved and because the fight had finished on enemy territory. In 1939 the situation was *günstig* again, so the offensive recommenced." "Good Lord," I said, "so it's really the High Command that runs Germany?" He smiled. "We're a warrior nation," he answered in his quiet, well-controlled voice. "And where does Hitler come in?" "Hitler is the perfect man to keep the rear in shape. We were let down by the rear. This time we found the man to keep the morale up. Very important that." He had a likeable, serious face. He wore glasses and spoke with a very courteous smile. "Our German world is based on arms. Arms are Germany's destiny. Arms till there's nobody left to bear arms against her. This is a religion with us. It makes the people enthusiastic and ready for every sacrifice, it makes the German philosopher write books about it, the statesman perorates, but to us —the soldiers, the specialists—it's a clear-cut issue. It's our job, and we look at it dispassionately. You, my friend, you're a painter. When you decide to paint a crucifixion, though you may be full of religious sentiment, you think of the colours you're going to use, of the background, and so on. It's the same with us in our art. We failed once; we didn't despair, and look where we now are. It's the indefatigable spirit of the German general staff that brought it about. We, the officers, personally didn't like the Führer. His origin, his manners, and all that. But once we realized that he was the ideal man to prepare the masses for this war and that he could be trusted to look after the civilian population, we stood by him and helped him along. You see, we carefully studied the faults of the last war and they didn't recur in this war. Look at the Schlieffen plan. We made it more perfect than it originally was. Look at National Socialism. We realized that in our days there must be socialism, too. So we gave it due consideration and we did away with the feudal system in the army. Officers and men are equals. It works surprisingly well. In the last war there wasn't the right spirit in the ranks. But Adolf Hitler has found what the German people needed."

I listened with great interest to the colonel. We became fast friends, and in the next six weeks I saw a lot of him. He used to come specially to Montmartre to talk with me. That man belonged to a world, to an idea, that I hate. He stood for war as a sheep stands for sheepiness. I loathe war, which is the harvest of fools. The sergeant-major's paradise. Yet I admired him. For five generations his Prussian family had served the rulers of Prussia in the Prussian Army. I met his son, who was a second lieutenant. He and his

ancestors had given their lives to a cause in utter completeness. The devil's cause, but because the giving was wholehearted, I respected him. Now, I suppose, he's lying dead somewhere in Russia, and it may be the same with his son.

He, in his own Prussian way, had a lot of understanding. He respected the French because they understood the fine things of life. He had a feeling for art and for the ridiculous, too. Of the Sacré-Cœur he said it was the kind of building the Kaiser would have fancied. To him, the quick German successes in Flanders and in France were as much a mystery as to me. Several times he asked me how was it possible that the French and the English did nothing to prevent them. Germany had shown in Poland her methods of warfare. The Polish campaign was but a dress-rehearsal of the May offensive. He, the professional soldier, was very much perplexed by it. "Look how they fought in '14," he'd often say. His conclusion was that either the Poles had been underestimated or they felt so safe behind the Maginot Line that they positively slept. He'd seen very little of the famous French artillery; he saw a Breton infantry regiment in action. They fought like lions. But he shook his head and said since the occupation he found out that the spirit of France was gone. They need a Hitler, he naïvely said. I heard an incredible story from him. A certain French town had been taken by the Germans on rails. The enemy came in a train. What a ghastly picture! You could almost see the stationmaster looking at his watch and registering that the enemy was five minutes late.

His son had fought in the Polish campaign. I heard of Poles fighting like savages, of the Polish cavalry charging tanks, lone Polish soldiers attacking a whole division on the march. Polish women and children firing at the invader. Fiends, fiends to be exterminated.

"They fought for their country," I said.

The colonel bought two water-colours. I sold one the same day to the corporal of a Panzer division. He told me at that time the not at all amusing story that his divisional commander was due for leave. However, he refused to go because, so said the divisional commander, he was the first German to enter Brussels and he didn't want to miss being the first German to enter London.

A similar trend of thought was expressed by a *Luftwaffe* officer who belonged to the Richthoven Squadron. He'd been with the Condor Squadron to Spain. That man sat at *Joe's* for about two hours and for two hours vituperated against England. I listened to him, fascinated. It was terrible. It was as though I were being

slapped continuously across my face: yet fascinated by his hatred I stayed on. He expressed the view that England was man's enemy. She stood in the way of the new order which would bring happiness and peace to mankind. England must be *kaputgeschlagen*. He knew England, he'd been to England.

He'd seen the R.A.F. It was a huge joke. The *Luftwaffe* would finish it off in no time. The English had invented the word 'gentleman' and said so often they were gentlemen that the poor bamboozled world believed them. Gentlemen? They were swine. They had systematically robbed the world of its riches. There would be no mercy for them. His German soul waxed indignant at the thought that those cunning English had managed to hold down for such a long while the rest of mankind. He never said Germans. He always spoke of man or mankind. It was for him the right way of putting it. The only men on earth are Germans, so when he said mankind he naturally referred to Germany.

He wasn't the only one to think so. They all thought so. I discovered that at the beginning, and every day confirmed it. There was no earthly reason to lie to a Hungarian who looked what they call a *Herr*. I did see them in undress. To me, by then, the issue was straight and simple. Germany, camouflaged in brown, was out for world dominion, and she'd do it if the shirt were red, striped, or of any other colour. They were the new chosen people. They were chosen by the sword and the fire. That had been known by the Germans since Hegel and Fichte. Only those didn't know it whose interest was to let Germany escape a second time, and those who were brandishing their empty scabbards against the myth of Nazism. Prussian militarism, now Nazism, and next time probably democracy.

Joe asked what would the Germans do once England was occupied? That made the member of the Richthoven Squadron smile.

"I'll give you an example," he said. "Here, because we've no grudge against the French, I pay you for my drink. I'm ordered to do so. But when I shall be going in a few weeks' time into an English pub I'll take out my revolver and first shoot the pub-keeper, then tell my men to help themselves to all the bottles. And it will be the same everywhere."

I felt a bit sick. I didn't take part in the conversation. When he was gone Joe said, with a grin, that he'd enjoyed my face.

But before he went Joe asked him how would England be conquered? First, was the answer, the *Luftwaffe* would get going. After that the landing would be a simple affair.

"Remember my words," he said. "Three weeks after we start bombing England, England will have to give in."

I remember his words.

"He told you, didn't he?" said Joe.

There came a little episode to prove that Joe's new anti-English attitude was only skin deep. It was the same with others. One morning, when I went into the bar to take up my salesman position on a bar-stool, he received me with a white face and in a small, trembling voice said: "It's all finished. We're lost." "What do you mean?" "The Germans have landed in London. It's taken. All is lost." "Rubbish." It was, but Joe's white face was genuine. I asked for an explanation and he had to admit that the news had shaken him. I know now, what he didn't know, that his real self was still hoping in secret that England wouldn't be defeated.

I met one evening three parachutist officers. The Germans call them *Fallschirmjäger*. They were from Berlin, the three of them. Very young they were. They were at pains to explain to Joe and me that a parachutist was a fine soldier; the bravest at any rate. The conversation drifted on to the Italians, whose *communiqués* were becoming jokes. (One Italian *communiqué* said that Italian aircraft had bombed an English cargo boat in the Red Sea, forcing her to escape.) They thought the Italians were huge jokes. By German standards perhaps they are. To me they always seemed a kind, cheery, peace-loving nation. One of them said that after all the spectacular bombing of Malta a German observation plane flew over the island. Perhaps, were his words, the Italians killed a rabbit, but our pilot couldn't see it. They talked like that, and once one of them said, "*Meine Herren*, you seem to forget the Gestapo!" They thought that riotously funny, and laughed. Whereupon I asked them what the Gestapo really was. They weren't explicit about it, but it appeared that in the Army and the *Luftwaffe* the Gestapo wasn't popular. They worshipped the Führer as the head of the Army and the nation. But for the Gestapo and other non-army organizations they had no time. The S.S. was included. Goering they loved. He was a great man. For Goebbels they had only contempt. They were of the opinion that the invasion of England would chiefly rest on the shoulders of the *Fallschirmjäger*. It would start soon. Before they left, one of them most emphatically declared that we shouldn't look upon them as on murderers, for they were brave soldiers. They never came again, though they said they would. I hope they did try to land in England and had met a brave soldier's end.

Yes, Goering was very popular among his troops. An opportunity was given me to see that popularity at close quarters.

Though the influx of Germans hadn't slowed down there were noticeably fewer of them by the beginning of July. But came an afternoon when the square was full once more. Like the first days it was. The difference was that they were apparently waiting for someone. I inquired for the cause of the excitement, and the answer was that Goering was at the Sacré-Cœur. I thought the Sacré-Cœur must feel honoured.

Then Goering himself made his appearance. He was sitting with Ribbentrop, the self-made nobleman, in a Rolls-Royce, of all cars. That Rolls-Royce had a Dutch number. For the life of me I couldn't think of a worse display of bad taste. To ride in the enemy's car which you had stolen from a defeated country! It was a 'swell automobile' and presumably Goering couldn't resist the lure of the most expensive car in the world.

A few soldiers on motor-cycles preceded the Rolls. Behind it were a couple of cars full of officers. That was the whole escort. Goering wore a white uniform and looked much thinner than in his portraits. He didn't make a bad impression. But Ribbentrop looked like an ageing third-rate gigolo who lives by selling the gold cigarette-cases he used to get when business was still brisk.

The soldiers shouted many *heils*. The Rolls went round the square and when it got, for the second time, in front of the *Mère Cathérine*, Goering stopped the car to let an army 'bus, loaded with sightseeing soldiers, pass by. A popularity-inviting touch.

He sat with a broad smile on his broad face, and soldiers rushed up and took snaps of him. Then the 'bus was out of the way and Goering was gone. The local people agreed that he was handsomer and thinner than the caricatures had implied and put it down as a further lie of the departed regime.

My imagination is pretty good. Nevertheless, it was defeated there at the beginning of July. The only disgust the French showed was with their departed government: the presence of the Germans was but a secondary consideration. The fullness of the military disaster was slowly unrolling before their eyes. The lack of planes, of tanks, of ammunition, was becoming known through those who returned from the front. Quite a lot of men that were made prisoners by the Germans managed to escape or get released at the beginning of the armistice. And there were many whom the Pétain government demobilized and sent back to Paris. Their stories were lamentable to hear. A friend of mine, who was an artillery officer,

related to me how his battery got the wrong sort of shells and couldn't fire a shot at the advancing Panzers. Another told me of tanks going into action with petrol sufficient only for half an hour; of officers leaving their men behind; of battalions being sent to a certain point where the Germans, in immense numerical strength, were waiting for them. Treason, they said, and utter inefficiency. But they said it quietly, apathetically. I understood them. To the Frenchman, the French Army had been akin to God. That army had bled and suffered in the struggle of 1914–18. There were two Germans to one Frenchman, yet on the Marne, in Champagne, at Verdun, and wherever there was room for blood to trickle to the French ground that army fought and finally won. Now the defeated enemy had rolled it up, sent it on the run, made it capitulate in one short month. That was more than anybody could bear.

They couldn't understand it. It was beyond their grasp. Treason and incompetence. *Nous étions vendus*, they said. I believe the word *vendus* will remain a landmark of the battle of France and its successor, Vichy. For Vichy they'd no time, either. If their country was so polluted and corrupt, then something new, something fresh and very different should take its place. And there was nothing different about Laval, the most corrupt of those who led France into the disaster. For Pétain there wasn't much sympathy either. Who knows, the workmen and charwomen argued at the *Choppe*, whether the treason didn't emanate from him? He'd always been a defeatist and belonged to the Right and was a known admirer of Laval. And he was much too old. Fresh blood was needed. Fresh blood? It would remain the same thing. Just a change of guards, the sentry-box remaining the same. That dislike of Vichy was immediately exploited by the Germans and they permitted the papers to write disparagingly of the government. The German idea was one half the *divide et impera* policy, and the other half was to give the impression in Occupied France that they were more interested in France's future than France's own government. The papers took their cue. A chase started against Vichy on the ground that they'd never make the fascist revolution which could save France, but the old corrupt system would go on under a different heading. But the Germans permitted no attack on the Maréchal's person. They knew his name was a great symbol and they knew, too, if he went, complete chaos would follow. Several Germans told me that Pétain was a sort of Hindenburg; but that history has to decide. I who have more reasons than others to remember with hatred his regime, feel convinced that in his own way that misguided

that Nogués, in Morocco, was going to fight on, too. I was completely out of touch with the outside world. I had no radio and around me there was nobody with a set powerful enough to get London. Then came Daladier's and Mandel's ill-fated trip to Morocco. It was heartbreaking to find out that all had failed and, with the exception of that young general in London, French resistance was over. Paul, with glee, confirmed that France was at Germany's feet. So there was French resistance only in London and that general had been cashiered by Pétain and sentenced to four years' imprisonment for not wanting to declare his country dead.

On the square I often saw an elderly woman who used to sing in night-clubs before the last war and now lived on something like one hundred and fifty francs a month, her *rentes*. She wore a wig and her blown-up old face carried a smile that had belonged to that face before time's famous chariot had slowly pushed across it. That smile was a living memory. I liked her. Her loyalties had never wavered. She said to me on the square, with German soldiers as a fitting background, "de Gaulle? With that name he must win." What a name, I said to myself. With that name you are bound to win.

The Moroccan business had been badly staged. A witty Frenchman explained to me that Daladier and Mandel made an initial mistake. They should have unearthed old Marshal Franchet d'Espérey and taken him to Morocco. Then they could have set up a government with him at the head of it. It would have been interesting to watch France rent in two, with a maréchal leading each opposing camp. I think it would have been a good idea. Anyway, it appeals to my special brand of humour.

Paul and the others who worked with the Germans were astonished at the lack of *Weltanschauung*. I said my experience was the same. Their interest lay solely in a German victory and the fulfilment of the German idea. In these days of salesmanship I ran into only one Nazi—I use the word in the sense it's used in England and in refugee literature. He was an army doctor and came from the town of Halle. He really believed in all that mystical stuff the soldiers had converted into panzers and conquest. He first told me he disliked Hungarians, for Hungarians were reactionaries and at heart anti-Germans.

"I don't know," he said, "why you people should be afraid of us. Think of all the countries we'll have to hold after the war. We don't want you. Can't you understand that? But the trouble with you Hungarians is that you're Catholics. The Catholics are the biggest scourge on earth. First comes England, the visible enemy

She'll be destroyed, but the *Pfaffen* are an invisible enemy and we'll have to fight them for a long time."

"What have you against them?"

"What? It's simple and stands to reason. They believe in that circumcised Jesus Christ who brought forth a *Weltanschauung* under which the Germans could never reach their fulfilment. He believed in humbleness and tears. We believe in blood and the German soil. We're not here to go on our knees and pray; we're here to be men; to fight, to win. He wants you to snivel, to whine. That isn't German. It's German to fight. Life is a battle. We don't want prayer-books, we want the sword."

"Tell me, do you believe in *Wotan*?"

"I believe in the German race. I believe in the German spirit. But *Wotan* expresses the German spirit whereas Jesus Christ doesn't."

He looked quite furious while he spoke.

As I've said, he was the only soldier who spoke to me of that sort of thing. But even if the doctrine didn't interest the masses in the Army, there's no getting away from the fact that Socialism had deeply penetrated the German way of thinking. Snobbery was completely gone. The men wouldn't stand for any more nonsense from their officers. *Joe's* was a small bar, and if all the tables were occupied any private sat down at a table where a colonel was sitting. Yet it didn't seem to impair discipline. Whenever I inquired of conditions in Germany the answer inevitably was that every man had a chance to get on, the privilege racket had ceased to exist, and they told me, as an instance, that in Pomerania, whence the Junkers hail, every year there came a government agricultural expert who would tell the landowners that on such and such an estate there must be produced so much in the next year; if the owner failed to produce the prescribed quantity the State took over the estate in the people's name and that was that. They were also proud of their monetary system. They said, 'look, we're not the slaves of gold. Work is money with us.'

It's many years since I read Marx, but if I remember right the 'work is money' principle came from him. It sounded fine to turn one's back on gold and be no more its slave: but I know very little of economics, though I do know that with their fine disregard of gold the Germans were searching for gold all the time. I repeat, however, there was a deep socialistic feeling in them, and to my mind, Hitler was, indeed, a genius of internal compromise when he produced National Socialism, the first half to suit the High Command and the second half to suit the masses; and both welded into

one aim—to destroy the world and thought of Frenchmen and Englishmen.

The *quatorze juillet* was approaching and the rumour spread in Paris that the Germans would have a colossal march past on the Champs Elysées, and Hitler in person would take the salute. Said a German officer to me, "Now you'll see what we have. At least ten thousand planes will fly overhead." A year ago the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the French Revolution was celebrated all over France. I was in Beaulieu and went to the *Réserve*, to a big banquet given in honour of the anniversary. The *Marseillaise*, *God Save the King*, *Madelon*, and a lot of speeches, and towards four in the afternoon one of the American guests standing on the table and singing quite inappropriate songs about Christopher Columbus. Now, a year later, the prospect of ten thousand German planes flying over the Arc de Triomphe as a salute to Hitler! It was a monstrous thought and as I saw before my eyes the banquet of only yesterday my hatred of the invader rose. To have spilt that fine life of France; the peacefulness of it. The American with a little too much wine in him singing on the top of the table during the national festival was a symbol of French tolerance, French respect for individuality, for liberty which used to be so French.

Nona came back from her mother with a story. Her mother's French teacher, a decayed French gentlewoman, had told her that the English told the Germans if they had a march-past on the *quatorze juillet* the English would come over with six thousand planes and blow Paris up with the Germans. That, the teacher said, was absolutely true. I thought it over, and the story seemed improbable and dangerous to spread. Supposing the march-past took place and no English planes put in an appearance, then England would be discredited, and it would only harm the good cause. For by then I had started on my whispering propaganda campaign of which I'd read recently in *Collier's* and which had been the successful German method. My selling the water-colours didn't take up too much of my time. The Germans didn't come before noon and now there were fewer of them, so I could absent myself for a few hours without bringing starvation to the seven beings whom the water-colours kept alive.

The idea came to me during those endless discussions Joe and I had about England and Germany while waiting for our mutual clients. And those discussions, in a more acid form, took place every night between Paul and myself. I asked myself why couldn't I use my breath in a more profitable way. Then it came home to me that I

could, in my way, render England a small service if I tried to undermine the Germans' all-pervading influence; discredit them, show the French they were mortal, too, and make the French realize there still was England, France's ally, and she hadn't disappeared as it was thought. For to many Frenchmen the sudden surprising death of their own world included the death of England too. England belonged to the dead yesterdays like the unbeatable French Army and safety behind the Maginot Line. The French Army was gone, had melted into thin air, and the Führer had decided to plant wheat where the Maginot Line had been. My first task, I decided, was to try to make the French aware of England. With that great amount of animosity about, it would be an uphill task, especially as England was associated with the late *Front Populaire*. Why the *Front Populaire*, I know not. Yet so it was. And there was German propaganda, which was first-rate.

It's interesting to record that the heavy Teuton in that line was subtler than the subtle Frenchman. The stuff the anti-English French papers produced cut no ice. To cite as an example: the continuous reiteration of the Paris Press that Mr. Churchill's ancestor was Marlborough, who fought the French. The people of Paris didn't care about that. With all the pressing, whirling problems of to-day, the Duke of Marlborough didn't serve the purpose of the detractors of his descendant. Songs French soldiers used to sing during Marlborough's campaigns appeared in the papers. They were considered interesting, even charming, and they left it at that.

As a comparison, there comes back to my mind a picture in one of the German illustrated papers. A couple of Etonians caught by a photographer in an attitude which neither denotes much brightness nor reaches above the ridiculous. To put it mildly, a couple of silly, conceited pups. Those silly faces aren't a monopoly of Eton. I used to have such a face, too. But dressed as Etonians it was a most persuasive composition. The caption said, "We're the sons of lords and millionaires. First we wanted those foolish foreigners, the French, to fight for us. Now our lower classes will do the fighting, and what do we care as long as our gilt-edged securities are all right." Disgusting, you say. Quite so, but as propaganda, excellent. Or the continuous praise of France and French valour. Laments for French blood that flowed for Albion. And above it all the fact, the living fact, of the German conquest. Hitler had predicted it. Now here he was. Conclusion: that man spoke the truth, if he spoke the truth he could be trusted. As a comparison, there was Mr. Chamberlain's speech in which he'd said

that Hitler had missed the 'bus; and Reynaud's speech about the *route de fer*.

With those shrieking, naked facts how could I expect to be believed if I went and told the French that England would save France and this huge and precise German monster would be defeated by England that hadn't a standing army and had gone to Munich, too? And as a final argument England's sympathy for the German bulwark against Communism and again, eternally again, why did England encourage Germany to remilitarize the Rhineland?

It wasn't an easy task, but having seen what I saw in the first month of the occupation, and having found in every German, from general to civilian, but a further propagandist of the Third Reich, I acquired my notions of propaganda.

All my life I deeply deplored propaganda. Somehow I considered it beneath thought, for facts and the deduction from facts in one's mind should be ample. But the Germans had taught me it was one of their chief weapons in the conquest of France and consequently in the subjugation of the Continent. (The Fifth Column was but a ways and means of propaganda. Propaganda brought the Fifth Columnist who, with propaganda, made other Fifth Columnists.) And that weapon would have to be used against them. Having swallowed the idea, it seemed to me that in propaganda you must chiefly insinuate. To tell the big facts, or relate great events, haven't the desired effect, but with insinuation you could travel far. Before the war you didn't hear of seventy-ton tanks, but you heard, coming from German sources, that such and such a French tank brigade on manœuvres remained clogged in the mud. What a pity! Of course, it didn't mean much, nevertheless you remained with the unpleasant thought that French tanks were either no good, or that officers and men didn't know their job. After a little while, you said the French Army was no good. I'd seen a lot of this, psychologically, very understandable process. Or a little story of a new French plane being taken up for the first time. The plane crashed because the bolts weren't screwed in properly. It discouraged you: French workmen couldn't be trusted. Your next conclusion was that, industrially speaking, the war was already lost. Then the Germans used with great success what I would call the 'contrary' story. Like the entrance of Russia into the war, or the Germans poking out the eyes of little children and ten minutes later they would be on the spot and giving milk to the children. The latter did a lot of mischief in France. The moronish propaganda organs of the government had taken up the German red herring of German cruelty (which fundamentally was true but wasn't practised on

account of the aforesaid propaganda reasons) and gave it the publicity the Germans desired. Hence, during the first weeks of the occupation, most pictures you saw in German or German-controlled papers were of German soldiers either feeding or embracing a French or Belgian child.

The contrary story had another version, too, which rather impressed me. Take, for instance, a German leader like Goebbels or Rosenberg. The rumour would go round that the man was in disgrace, in fact he was arrested. The allied newspapers would jump to it, the man in question wouldn't be heard of for some time. Then, when he was practically buried in London and Paris, he would be up and doing among the mighty and the allied Press gets all the discredit in the world.

There was another difficulty before me. Since the capitulation of France the jackals and hyenas of the Continent had risen to bite the dying lion. It was surprising how many enemies England had of a sudden; how many people had been wronged by her. Sacha Guitry had hardly straightened his back from bowing to the King and Queen when he discovered he hated the English. Not that Sacha Guitry ever really mattered.

Nona's mother got hold of *Time*, the American news magazine, which, God only knows how, had flitted into Occupied France. This copy quoted Walter Duranty as saying at Bucharest that in a month's time there wouldn't be an Englishman left free on the Continent of Europe. If that was the impression in Roumania, then the impression in Paris is easily to be imagined. Now there was Robert, whom I'd known for a considerable period, yet he must wait till July to discover that ten years ago, when he'd visited London, he'd had a rotten time. And as a contrast the Germans were so correct: oh, so very correct. The other day a German officer in one shop bought bags and suitcases for fifty thousand francs. And it's bitter, yet true, that it's heartbreakingly easy to love the victor. There are people, few and far between, who like to succour the damsel in distress, but the majority abhors her.

It was a complicated task—pro-English propaganda in Paris in July 1940. Yet it was the only thing to give me the illusion of doing something for the country I loved. My first efforts, I must confess, were utter failures. I usually lost my temper, or went beyond the dreams of indiscretion. The people of Paris weren't keen to be reminded of England for another reason, too. They wanted to forget that anything could have been, or still could be, different. Peace they wanted and oblivion. Peace even with the Germans, peace with no memories, hence no remorse. A man who recently re-

turned from the war put it bluntly, though without marshalling his facts.

"You," he said to me, "must surely belong to the Intelligence Service, otherwise you wouldn't disturb us with your accursed stories." My last connections with the Intelligence Service had been in reading Mr. Phillips Oppenheim's books when I was as yet of the age and temperament to look for that sort of thrill. But the remark was unpleasant in the bar a little below the Place du Tertre, where sat a few German soldiers who, even if they didn't understand French, must surely have heard those two words before. The Germans went on drinking in peace, and I stopped talking of broken pledges and the Royal Navy. For among other matters I had been holding forth on the Navy and saying that as long as there was a Navy the Germans couldn't conquer the British Empire; and even if they landed in England the war wouldn't be finished. That had upset the serenity of the newly defeated. So I took counsel with myself and dropped England and concentrated on the Germans; to discredit them with the French. My first harmless little story was partially true. The second story was entirely true.

The bulk of the Germans were no longer in Paris. The troops had been withdrawn to the outskirts and were stationed in what is called *La Région Parisienne*. Actually there was but one division left in Paris, and the staff and supplies and so on. But for a German soldier it was strictly forbidden to enter the town without a special pass; such a pass was very difficult to obtain. There were many rumours afoot why the German troops had been withdrawn. The Germans themselves said it was on account of venereal disease the soldiers had picked up in Paris, and because there were too many temptations for the simple and decent Fritz. As the Führer had promised that every German soldier would see Paris, they came from every part of France in groups, like Cook's tourists in days that now seemed like a fairy-tale, and with guides, under the command of their officers, visited the town, but such groups had to be outside Paris by seven in the evening. These conducted tours invariably ended up at the Sacré-Cœur and then, with rare exceptions, the soldiers fell out for refreshments, which gave them an hour or so to get drunk and search for venereal disease.

It was between four and five in the afternoon that the pubs on the Butte were full of *feldgrau* uniforms. I never missed that hour at *Joe's* and so I came to know quite a few of the guides. One of them one day complained that he had lost an hour or so because two of the lorries that brought the soldiers had broken down. In the different little pubs I visited on Montmartre, and where I knew most of the

clientèle, I related this, adding a little varnish to it and saying it was a daily occurrence. It may sound stupid and tame. Yet I know it wasn't bad anti-German propaganda for the times. It was a well-established fact by the time war broke out that German tanks were of cardboard; I suspect the Germans themselves of encouraging the spreading of the tale. The mechanical side of the German Army was, therefore, of no consequence. Lorries belonged to that side. The mechanical units of that Army licked, a little later, the French Army and the B.E.F. The effect was that German machines were faultless because they were invincible.

They were good, no argument about that. It wasn't my business to say so. Now when I stood at the zinc counter and told stories about German lorries that were breaking down it made one of the customers remark after a little thought that the German lorries weren't so good after all. Another said that French Army lorries practically never broke down. He knew it because he and some comrades had deserted from the front in a lorry and they drove as far as Toulouse without any trouble. A third said that, apparently then, everything that was German wasn't good after all. Whereupon a woman butted in saying that do you suppose everything they had was perfect? I was pleased with my innocent tale.

My second story was of a stronger fibre. A girl who plied her melancholy trade on the Butte told me that a German soldier had deserted. He'd spent the night with her and in the morning gave her money to go to a large store and buy him a civilian suit. She bought it for him, he stayed a couple of days with her, then he said this was the last the German Army and Paris would see of him. He'd some friends in the *Centre*—French people he'd met previously—who would surely hide him. He also added that after the good wine and beautiful girls he'd known, he didn't want to be drowned in the Channel when the invasion started. I was delighted with it. The girl wasn't explicit; such girls seldom are. It was a plum for me, no doubt about that. True, too.

That was the first German deserter I heard of. Later many more followed; by many I mean one in ten thousand. What those poor chaps hoped for I couldn't say. Usually they ended up either in a Vichy jail or concentration camp, which was far worse than the German Army. Here I should add that when the Germans occupied a tiny town I knew on the other side of the demarcation line, and though they knew they'd stay only till the armistice was signed, notices were spread everywhere that it was forbidden to sell civilian clothing to German soldiers. Speaks for itself.

Well, I went the round of the Butte, which was like a village,

and everybody knew everybody else, and told about the soldier of the victorious army who had deserted. It was a bombshell.

I kept it up.

All the time I was arguing with anyone who would listen (it's one of my accomplishments that in pubs I'm listened to: elsewhere, less or not at all) about England's war guilt. That war guilt business was part and parcel of German propaganda, too. I reminded people that it had been a common French saying from 1938 onward that war was preferable to the sort of peace Europe was indulging in. And before the war the anti-English had said that in the event of war England would let down her ally. Now it was the other way round. Terrific rows would follow. During these rows I used to forget that the Germans were outside, and very often inside, too. To spread false rumours was a serious offence against the occupying forces, and once more it was a proof of the stuff the French are made of, that though most of them disagreed with me, nobody thought of denouncing me. I, for one, never thought that my talk could cause me trouble. I've been fundamentally a free person most of my life. Freedom is a habit that clings to you long after it is supposed to be gone.

I was rather busy those days; and very unhappy. There was the invasion ahead, and now Hitler's peace offer to England. What, I asked myself at night when I felt at my lowest, if she accepted? If all I thought, prayed for and said were but a rodomontade! Then I'd be annoyed with myself for being so weak. And Dodo? She was wasting under my eyes. I invented every reason in the world to account for her depression. I said she was jealous of Cooky, who was running happily round and chewing everything that was fit for his sharp little teeth. That wasn't true either. Outside the *Mère Cathérine* she bit into a German soldier's boot. The soldier was quite decent about it. She wasn't. She barked long after he left.

Then, on 13th July, I got a letter. The postman hadn't been to me since the occupation. The letter was from London. Apparently, the post-office, now that part of its staff had filtered back to Paris, was distributing the last letters that had arrived before the final catastrophe. The letter was from my literary agent, Mr. A. D. Peters, telling me he sold two short stories to a monthly in London. I gazed for a long time at that letter. 'From the other side of the grave,' I said, half aloud. Outside German soldiers were going arm-in-arm with prostitutes. The soldiers laughed. A little girl was whistling Strauss's *Walzertraum*. *Kultur* was coming into its own. Vendors and hawkers were roaming the square and, in the

place of *J'attendrai*, the latest hit whined forth from the pubs, where French wine was making the *Boche* sentimental:

Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! Oh Mon Amour.

And there was a letter before me from London, W.C.2.
Paris that summer was like a rose in the gutter.

Of the vendors who made a good living I remember best a tall, burly man who used to be a *contremaître* in a factory, and with the advent of the Hun lost his job. Like most Frenchmen, he had a large family. This doesn't mean offspring, but aunts and sisters-in-law and the invalid uncle of the wife. There he was with all those mouths to be kept in *pot au feu* and *pinard*. He struck on an idea which wasn't only businesslike but gives a fair picture of the vaunted moral austerity of Hitler's Germany. He bought up a large stock of old numbers of *Paris Nuit*, *Sex Appeal*, *Paris*, and other illustrated papers that specialized in breasts, navels and thighs. His daily average was above three hundred copies. German columns would march down the square with officers, N.C.O.s and martial songs, and the late *contremaître* would run beside the column selling his naked women at an amazing rate. Incidentally, smutty picture post-cards were very popular, too, but as they couldn't be had easily the Germans were forced to take those magazines as the next best thing.

Came the *quatorze juillet*, and there was no display of German strength and power. The general and the lieutenant-colonel came again and told me the reason there had been no review was that the Führer was doing everything in his power to make peace with England. For, the general said, he didn't want two Nordic peoples to fight one another. That was being said a lot. A little later it was never alluded to. My contention is that Hitler was afraid to break up the British Empire by sheer force. The Empire would crumble to pieces and in the process much of its richness would disappear. America would take Canada, Russia might invade India, and it was certain that his Japanese allies would grab as much as they could. But by infiltration, which peace inevitably would have meant, he could have got it all with the larder full. I can substantiate this with his own remark in his speech at the time when he said he didn't want to break up such a great empire, and by a remark a German civilian of some standing made a few weeks later. He said Germany had no interest in seeing the Japs coming practically to Suez, nor did Germany want to fatten America with Canada.

The historians in the next century will have to admit the Germans

thought precisely and followed their thoughts to the logical end. They had no illusions about America, which meant that, albeit, they didn't expect America to come into the war; they realized that eventually America would have to be *kaputgeschlagen*, too. As I sat with Nona outside the *Mère Cathérine* one evening I heard a German civilian who was sitting inside but quite close to the window saying to his dinner companion that after England, America would have to be *kaputgeschlagen*, too, otherwise the *liberalistische Schweinewirtschaft* would insinuate itself into the new order. I straightway translated his words to Nona, who shrugged her shoulders, for she saw the German road as clearly as I. It wasn't difficult.

It will always remain a standing surprise to me how utterly straightforward the Germans were with me once it was established that I was a Hungarian; and even more astonished in view of later events how I got away with everything that summer. The Butte surely remembers the manner Nona and I used to talk openly of the Boche. We used no camouflage. Very surprising. They spoke openly, frankly, and you only heard of German war aims and German *Sieg*, and there was very little said of Nazism and new world order. But that came, too. It wasn't, however, meant for me. I just listened-in, that was all.

It started with my meeting the son of Count Keyserling, the German philosopher. He was in the cavalry. A nice boy. Though we had a few friendly chats he didn't buy any water-colours. In the name of the seven people who lived on the water-colours, I rather deplored that attitude. He was a firm believer in Hitler and painted a beautiful world the new order would produce after England—the only obstacle—had ceased to be on the map. As he knew I was an author he asked me not to write about him if I left for America. (I couldn't very well tell him it wasn't America I was thinking of.) That was a rash promise. They were easy to make, with the chance of my ever writing again as distant as the snows of Villon. Now I've got to keep it. But through him, without him being aware of it, I met an interesting German, who opened up before me highly exciting vistas of the real German propaganda to come. By the end of July the Germans had found the road of Franco-German relations they intended to travel. But by the end of July there was another serious matter in the air: the invasion of England.

Around the middle of July all talk that two Nordic peoples should not be at war had ceased. With the Germans everything goes by order. So if anything ceases it ceases completely, it's dead,

and if it's resurrected then there's an order for it, too. The Wilhelmstrasse declared that now that the peace offer of the Führer was rejected Germany would answer England with facts. The first fact was that the soldiers spoke with increasing venom of the English. It was a galaxy of hatred, an endless blare of trumpets. *Le Matin* brought the headline that from Narvik to Biarritz Germany was ready to launch the attack. Paul rushed back with the news that the onslaught would start between 28th July and 5th August. Paul was frank with me, too. For a different reason than the Germans. It gave him sadistic pleasure to see me worried, and anyway, there was no danger for I could never get away.

Anguish was, those days, my constant shadow. Constant is hardly the word: we were as one. My whole ego was but a prayer, a hope. If the sky was overcast, I said surely they couldn't start to-day; if there was a wind, I said the barges couldn't sail that day. Though my faith never wavered I fully appreciated the danger that might pounce anywhere between Narvik and Biarritz. The refugees who came from Germany from 1933 onward, and who knew them all their lives, spoke disparagingly of German strength and resolution. I, who knew them but a month, was fully aware that it was immense: fire and blood would cover English fields and streets when the invasion started. Victorious, because she must be mauled and hurt, England would remain. Robert, who was visibly becoming pro-German, said, "Your English friends could just as well surrender as remain victorious with London waste land and half the population dead." That, in July, was a generous way of putting it.

Invasion specialists moved through Paris. Elderly troops wearing the usual *feldgrau* but with crossed yellow anchors on their sleeves. They said they were the men who landed in Norway, and the soldiers were expecting their command to start at any moment. It was in the air, you could almost touch it.

Paul's information had been every time accurate, and from the evidence that was round me in the streets, in conversation and in troop movements, I believe that the Germans were ready to invade England around 28th July, and they were going to invade her. Why they didn't, I don't know. Pressed for an explanation by a French friend, I managed to hit on one. I said to him that it was an old-established fact that God was an Englishman. My French friend thought that was as good an explanation as any.

But to revert to the course Franco-German relations were taking.

Otto Abetz, that man of great talent, was in Paris. Incidentally, Ferdonnet, the traitor of Stuttgart, had arrived in Paris, and the

papers reported that he had bowed before the tomb of the Unknown Soldier. As my charwoman put it, you wanted to rush to the first bucket and get copiously sick. But to revert. . . . Abetz was surrounded by Germans of the upper classes, men of culture, which is very different from *Kultur*, men who liked France. France to them had stood for the fine things of life, and the conquest of France meant to possess all those fine things. There was nothing of the puritanical disgust of the German soldier and lower middle-class civilian about them. The soldier and little employee said Paris was the hotbed of vice, and then went and slept with the cheapest prostitutes. They said it was disgusting to like food and drink as the French did, and they ate two portions of chicken and got royally drunk. But the men of the upper classes considered themselves experts on French food and French wine. (It had come the way of most of us who lived in France to be invited sooner or later by a German to dinner and have a lot of *canetон à l'orange* and sweet champagne thrust down our throats, the time being well pre-1939.) But they loved France for her art and literature too. Some of them were surprisingly well read in French literature. And now, when they spoke of those French things and of France itself, it was the talk of the *connoisseur* who was getting an *objet d'art* for practically nothing. Young Keyserling was like that, and so was his cousin, Bismarck, but the man I came to know fairly well showed it completely. That was dangerous. Beware of the passionate lover.

He was a member of one of the best-known Prussian families. His forebears were statesmen, soldiers, and German thinkers. He had good manners and a good brain. We met quite often. His mother, so he told me, was a personal friend of Hitler's. Hitler liked her, and she saw much of him. He knew him, too.

"What is he like?" I asked. He told me. Apparently, Hitler was like his speeches, his pictures, his acts. I inquired after his brains and the count told me that it was of no importance whatsoever whether Hitler had brains or not. What mattered was his inspiration, which was satisfactory. His mother's summing-up was that Hitler was a medium; the medium of the German people. It meant, speaking in spook jargon, that the ghost was Germany and the medium through which it expressed itself was Hitler. I thought that over and it seemed to me a good definition of the man that couldn't sell his paintings. Take his sentimental moments; I saw Germans getting just as nauseatingly sentimental. Take his treacherous cruelty; that was German, too. Consider his love of display, of marching and counter-marching: they are deeply rooted in the German heart.

"He only acts on impulse," the count said. "He communes with the masses as a normal man with women. He told my mother that when he marched into Austria his idea was to get rid of Schuschnigg, put Seyss-Inquart into power and turn Austria into a National-Socialist state. But when he got up the first morning in Linz and went on to the balcony, he saw the immense crowd waiting for him, and as they cheered him madly he decided to incorporate Austria into the Reich."

I have no comment to make. It seems a likely story: it could easily be true. The count went on to say that the attack on Holland, Belgium and France came about the same way. Hitler was inspired by the wish of the German people. It was a great German impulse to be in Paris in June. The Fifth Column work that preceded the noble impulse must have belonged to the other side of the psychic research show. Mediums are precise people, and the dark curtains and eerie light are just as much part and parcel of the show as the chatting of the ghost. The Germans had wanted Paris for a long time; now Hitler gave it to them. There's another twist to this; rather a Teutonic twist.

We spoke and drank and Dodo sat sadly under the table. It came home to me that Hitler's utter lack of keeping his word was a German speciality too. With very rare exceptions the Germans I met broke their word: easily, as though the most natural thing in the world, without giving it a second thought. If a German said he would see you next day, then most certainly he wouldn't. Quite at the beginning I had asked a German private how he accounted for the Führer telling Mr. Chamberlain that the Sudetenland was his last territorial claim in Europe and six months later he marched into Prague. The soldier was astonished by such a naïve question. He said, where important matters like the conquest of a country were concerned (in his version it was the defence of Germany against Czech aggression), unimportant trifles like a given word couldn't interfere. Now I put the question to the count.

"My dear fellow," he said, "Germany is out to reshape the world. You don't want Hitler to stop in his tremendous historic task because it had suited at a certain moment German policy to make a promise?" He contemplated the alternative with an elegant shudder.

Because we saw each other often and because I met several of his friends, the men around Abetz, I succeeded in putting two and two together and had a picture of the stuff they were putting across the French.

The nineteenth century had produced industrial capitalism, which made the world safe for the English and American version of

democracy. This meant unemployment and the suffering of the masses: the capitalists accumulated all the wealth in the world. It was a hideous materialistic world without fine ideals, impulses; only grabbing and grabbing by a few. Democracy never existed; in fact, it was plutocracy. On account of her austere ideals Germany couldn't fit into such a world. Moreover, she was kept away from the flesh-pots of the earth. (A nice contradiction this.) Germany first revolted against the plutocratic system in 1914. But German thought wasn't fully expressed by the men who led her in that war. The Kaiser stood for Prussian feudalism, which was a past phase. So she was beaten. It had been a parochial business. But in Adolf Hitler not only Germany had found the full expression of herself but he brought the new world order for entire mankind. Hence his success. There was only England that stood in the way of the great dawn to come. She had held down France and with her principle of balance of power had kept Europe at war, which suited her plutocratic exploiting policy. Soon that last obstacle to European happiness would be removed and then France would have a great part to play in the fresh scheme of things; a leading part.

It must be confessed, and the Abetz crowd wasn't loath to confess, that Germany wasn't quite prepared for the fine things of life and for the delightful life itself that would follow England's defeat. She'd no reason to blush. She did the fighting, she sacrificed her blood for the coming golden age. It would be the rôle of France to be her teacher and leader in the art of *savoir vivre*. Forty million French men, women, and children, forty million masters of ceremony! I liked that picture. I couldn't help telling the count that I liked it very much. He brushed me aside, saying there was a parallel in history; Greece, after she had been conquered by Rome. Oh, those Greek slaves in Rome, what a perfect time they had! The real essence of France was art and literature. No longer would France have to keep an army; Germany would defend her. Her only job would be to be the garden of Eden and the Muses of Europe, too. *Marianne* playing on her flute and sitting on hefty *Fritz's* muscular arm. Or *Fritz* wearing a dress by Schiaparelli and dancing, under *Marianne's* tuition, *le fox*.

The garden, to me, meant that all France's industries would go and she would have to produce the wheat and grapes the Hun needed. The military, who were simple and blunt and thought not of Græco-Roman periods, had told me so in a straightforward manner. Their way of putting it was that a country so rich in agriculture should be kept to it; anyway, having no industries she would become completely dependent on Germany.

The painters of the beautiful picture didn't forget to calm suspicion and fear. Concentration camps? The Gestapo? The famous Nazi cruelty? The answer was ready. Concentration camps and the Gestapo belonged to the transitory period. That sort of thing had been needed at the beginning, needed till the idea had taken foothold. After the defeat of England that necessity would automatically cease. Hitler? Somehow the French didn't see him in the new paradise. Hitler? The Führer had a lot of understanding and at any rate, once he accomplished his task he would go and live high up at Berchtesgaden and Europe would worship him in his peace and serenity. Goebbels, Rosenberg and the old-fashioned Nazis would have to go. Those people and their crowd belonged to a frustrated, poor Germany thirsting for revenge. In the golden age there would be no room for them. Another historical allusion followed. Mahomet and his assassins. Hitler was Mahomet and the S.S. the assassins. But once Islam came into its own a great culture grew out of it; the Caliphs of Granada. This wasn't so far back in history as Rome, though, geographically speaking, Granada was further than Rome.

I'm sorry to record that this sort of talk was lapped up by French intellectuals, perfected by them, and so it served its purpose. It was clever propaganda, accentuated by the fact that Abetz and the men around him believed in it. My friend, Robert, was the first to succumb.

"It's so wonderful," he told Nona, with shining eyes and presumably his beard shining, too, "there's something at long last I can believe in."

Michel, the late friend of Blum, the upholder of the *Front Populaire*, was now back in Paris. He fell for it completely. I had been waiting for him to come back, and this was a real shock. I felt more and more like a tiny isle on its own. There would be no more sordid dealings on stock exchanges and looking for gold. Abundance would come into the place of capitalism. Money was work, and if you worked there was money. It was unnecessary to hoard, because in the new Europe everything would be distributed in a just manner. For the artist, the thinker, the great day would dawn. Material worries wouldn't hamper his work. Away from the count and his refined friends, I, the Montmartre *Maler*, had often been assured that after the war we painters would have a ripping time. So it was doubly reassuring to hear that from the count. The Germans were bringing salvation.

On the other side of the picture was England and her colonies which she exploited, her starving unemployed, slums, and the fat City of London.

The same story was at the back of the mind of the papers, only less subtly expressed. It was a great story, a clever story. Now Germany would give France what most suited France. Abetz and his friends would pull the curtain and the *tableau* would be lighted up with violet and pink and in Elysian fields the French would hop around sweet, spouting fountains, wine would flow, casseroles would steam and Dionysus would tumble over Apollo. No more two years' military service, no *taxe d'armement*, no fear of war. Germany would see to it. One flaming fact stood out and the Germans saw to it that it should stand out that the new garden of Eden had to wait till England was smashed. Hence it was in everybody's interest to see England defeated as soon as possible. A shrewd point that.

To the simple people who, luckily, are the majority of the population of France, Germany said less and with less flourish. France would remain occupied till England's defeat, and the two million French prisoners wouldn't be released before that was accomplished. In a nation of hardly forty millions, two million men mean a lot. To see your country rid of the invader means a lot, too. England was in the way. And while the people realized that, up in the north of France thousands of English prisoners were being hidden by the people and thousands helped to escape. They gave them money, civilian clothing, and risked their lives doing so. They did that at the time when they still thought that England had deserted them at Dunkerque, and, anyway, England wouldn't fight. France is known for her glorious history, art, and literature, and in the future she will be remembered by all of us, who were either English by rights or by inspiration, as the country where people are good, heroically good.

"You should," I said to Michel, "speak to the military. They tell a different story." But the sensitive Michel didn't want to speak to the military. On the contrary, he assured me that the military caste would disappear after the German victory. High Party officials told him so. For Michel hadn't wasted his time: he was well in with the Abetz crowd in no time. I nodded. That was how the Party men spoke.

Though I didn't speak to as many civilians as to soldiers, yet from their talk I drew the conclusion pretty easily that the Party plotted against the Army exactly as the Army despised the Party. That kind of thing was as old as history. Here, with the Germans, the game was played according to the rules, too. The Army had needed the N.S.D.A.P.; as a matter of accurate fact the Army had boosted it. It needed it before the war to get the war spirit and

civilian organization to war pitch, and now it needed it to keep the rear in order. The Party at the beginning had needed the Army to help it to power and keep it in power: now, as specialists of warfare, it needed it more than ever. And both were waiting to get rid of the other at the first opportunity.

To prophesy isn't within the scope of this book. Having listened to both and heard their guttural voices *ad nauseam*, I believe that the Army would be quite willing to make a new November 1918, if it were convinced that the situation was no longer *günstig* enough for the continuation of the present war, and because the High Command thinks in decades, if not in centuries, and would wait till a new opportunity came along twenty or thirty years hence. It stands to reason the Army would jettison the Party the moment that necessity arose. The Party, on the other hand, wouldn't need the Army in the new order: in fact the Army would be a hindrance, a nuisance. The Party wants the Army to lay the golden egg, and that would be the end of the Army. For England, France, and America it matters little which of the two is momentarily in power. Their aims are identical. There's more cant in the Party and its roots aren't so deep. And in that internal squabble where does Hitler come in? He's the will-to-fight of the German people. When that will is crushed or allowed to retire into the background, as it was allowed at Versailles, then he will automatically fade out.

"Michel," I said, "you were the great friend of the *Front Populaire*, the pal of Léon Blum; and now?"

"Can't you see the Germans are fulfilling the programme of the *Front Populaire*? The things Blum promised are being given us by Hitler."

At a distance, with time shrouding that distance, these words sound like the words of a moron. But that was believed by many intelligent, well-educated men there in the Paris of 1940. Moral collapse, you say: the results of ingenious propaganda, I say. But I must say something else, too. The very sensitive French mind had felt for a considerable period that somewhere something was wrong with the system that burned coffee in Brazil while people thirsted for coffee over here; that kept up misery and sordid surroundings, and made man the slave of the machines which should have liberated man from toil. And because that was in the air in their hour of complete bewilderment, they turned to the enemy for that change. The enemy had so efficiently defeated them: perhaps he would be as efficient in solving their problems. Perfectly ludicrous. For had Germany not harassed the world since 1866 the

world might have concentrated on eliminating those cardinal troubles. But all the world could do was either to have a little respite or to have to fight the Germans unprepared. But the fact remains that the new order caught the fancy of the intellectual, especially as the German of to-day is undoubtedly a Socialist. There are very extreme socialistic doctrines deeply embedded in the Party. It would surprise many of the frightened pre-war English and French capitalists if they realized who were the people that were going to save them from Communism.

There was the French moral collapse, too. I ran into it during my talking tours in the pubs. It began with *mea culpa*, and ended with *mea culpa*. Between the *meae culpae* it said here we were France, the victor of the last war, the richest country on the continent of Europe, yet twenty years after our victory we are defeated inside a month. Now we must suffer. We deserve our punishment: we lived too well. Let the Germans make men out of us. I argued that it was France's job, France's own affair, to put her house in order and not for the Germans to do it for her.

The Germans were rounding up the English civilians. Many had stayed on calmly, sat in arm-chairs and smoked their cigars: I knew one who was taken away from the bridge table. He was surprised when his game was interrupted after the Hun was already more than a month in Paris. They weren't arrested by the Germans themselves: usually the French police were sent to do it. Paul, in his sneering voice, suggested that if I were a real man I would go to the Germans and ask them to intern me with the English, since my heart belonged to England. Because I had thought of that, too, his words gave me a a real stab. Those old women came marching down the road.

"It would be fun," Paul said. "Your English fellow prisoners would take you for a German spy."

The month of July was setting, it was noon and Saturday. Though the concierge was back the canaries were still with me, for she who had deserted her post told me haughtily that I should keep the canaries because she never took back presents. I was looking out through the window, and there was the wall, and the radio was bleating in French, having previously spoken in German to the troops. Mme Marchand's lame granddaughter was in the courtyard humming *Wien, Wien, nur du allein*. Nona was out with Dodo. Cooky was running up and down, intent on getting fast into the depth of life. In the kitchen the charwoman was cooking *Bœuf Bourguignonne* and sampling the white wine she was putting into the

stew. First comes the *bouquet*, then the wine. I was reading a book on the Battle of the Marne, for as befits a bewildered man, I was back in the past during my time off from selling water-colours to the enemy. There before me was Gallieni's famous *coup d'œil*, and I reflected that why, oh why, had there been no miracle in this war. A German staff officer had told me, laughingly, that in this war Germany had taken the necessary precautions against miracles.

He didn't know it, and as I've said before, I didn't know it, but a miracle had taken place. It was just after Dunkerque. For had the Germans invaded England at the beginning of June the light would have gone out. Now I began to understand the miracle. It was based on two different causes.

The first one was that the German Army, so said many high officers, expected the campaign of France to last three months. It lasted less than a month. When the Kaiser, in 1914, told his chief of staff, von Moltke, that he only wanted to fight the Russians and didn't fancy war on two fronts, von Moltke gave the oft-quoted answer that all plans had been drawn up for simultaneous mobilization in the east and west, and that it was too late to change them. The Kaiser's bitter reply that his uncle would surely have given a different answer is neither here nor there. So with the Meuse behind them, and Boulogne and Calais captured, the immense German war machine had to roll on, and once France capitulated there still were two months' plans and organization left for the already finished campaign.

The second reason was deeper and appeals more to the fancy, though fundamentally it has more truth to it. It was caused by the glory of the French past, by her high rank among nations and by her prestige. It was a plum neither Hitler nor the generals could resist, and the precise High Command fell for the temptation. So they threw strategy and the grand opportunity to the wind, and instead of invading England marched into fair Paris. It wasn't the French Army of 1940 that saved England; definitely not. England was saved by the French armies of the past. I liked that picture of men dying at Wattigny, Austerlitz and Verdun to save England from invasion in a month of June in years and years to come.

The bell rang, I went to the door, and there was Nona holding Dodo in her arms. Dodo, in the street, had suddenly started to turn round and round and foam at the mouth. I looked at Dodo and she looked at me with that sadness that was in her eyes since the coming of the Hun. I was frightened. Those were the symptoms of distemper, but Dodo was four, and had been inoculated against it as a puppy. I didn't know where to take her, having very little

confidence in the last vet. So I went and found Robert, who knew Docteur Briand, the best vet in Paris. He rang him up, made an appointment, and then there was a long argument how to take Dodo to the rue Jouffroy, which was quite far. Robert settled the argument by taking Dodo in his arms and starting down the forest of stairs. We covered her up in blankets; thus we managed to get her into the *Métro*, where dogs weren't allowed. The coach was crowded, but when the good people of Paris saw it was a *pauvre toutou* they gave us seats.

Docteur Briand, a fine old man with a fine white beard, examined my friend and said she had distemper, but added, looking at my frightened face, that there was every chance of saving her provided she ate well and was given a daily injection. I should bring her back on Monday.

For me distemper is something terrible, final. When my brother and I were tiny children we lost our first two dogs, two collies, from distemper, and because I hardly ever have been without a dog all through my unreasonable, stormy life, distemper followed me as an evil shadow. Now it was here again; and for me, in those days of tribulation and faith, it was impossible to visualize my road without those orchid-like ears and deep, limpid eyes beside me. We were to bring Cooky, too, on Monday, for he was bound to get it from his mother. There were lots of medicines and phials to buy, so tucking my sorrow away I talked glibly to the clients of the Montmartre *Maler*.

On the Sunday that followed, same as on any old Sunday, a lull came after luncheon, and in the square, with lots of empty tables around, I saw two Germans on horseback appearing from behind the *Bohème*; an officer and a trooper. When they dismounted the officer sat down and ordered a drink, while the soldier stood with the horses and waited. There was something familiar about those horses and horsemen. I went up to the trooper and asked him to what cavalry regiment they belonged. He said both the officer and he were Uhlans. A little shiver ran through me. My dream of 9th May had come true. But the *flic* who fought to the end in my dream was nowhere.

I can say nothing, however, against the Paris policemen. Their position was a ticklish one, to put it mildly. But one of the early days of occupation I noticed one standing in the square wearing all his decorations. The Germans stopped and stared at the medals. A small ring of Germans was round him. To stare unblushingly was a German habit, as was asking endless personal questions. The *flic*

got tired of the staring and said, "The medals, eh? They're not of this war. They're of the last war. You know the war I mean. The one we won."

That Sunday was a memorable day, for that day I kicked out Paul. It was high time. Our after-curfew discussions were approaching a climax. The *finis Angliae* touch was becoming too much. There was an evening when, with a lot of wine in us, I decided he should sing *God Save the King*, and no bones about it, either. I kicked him round the table, and because there was little physical resistance in him he gave way. Lurching to and fro he sang it and I stood beside him looking, I suppose, rather pompous. He had to stand to attention while he sang: it wasn't easy for him. He was a mine of information, and now and then his nasty mind revolted against the servility of the French *bourgeoisie* and the kow-towing that was going on around the Germans. The English, at least, were ready to die, he admitted. But my patience, like that of Hitler, was at last exhausted. With Dodo sick on my bed, I heard him arrive and fall on the stairs. There he lay dead-drunk, and when the concierge came and tried to remove him he kicked out at her. So I kicked him out and he spent the night on the square. Probably I would have relented next day, but when Nona, Pedro, Robert, and I were having a drink outside the *Mère Cathérine* he came up to our table. I told him I didn't want him there, whereupon he said I would speak differently once England was off the map. He knew how to hurt. So I knocked him down: it was too easy. He got up, and calling us all a pack of fools for having kept him, he left the Butte for good. First, however, he emptied Robert's glass.

Before I leave him I must relate a perfect little episode about him. Some highly placed Germans, struck by his brains and knowledge, invited him out to dinner. The dinner started off with Paul painting them a picture of the situation in France, and how inept Pétain's government was, and how they would never be able to make a real fascist revolution, and he went on to outline a kind of National Socialism that would go down with the French. His talk was brilliant and the Germans listened attentively, ready to ask him to draw up a plan for a new constitution of France. Paul drank copiously and, with the wine in him, forgot about the new constitution of France, and his need for ready cash to be turned into wine was the subject for which he dropped it. The meal that had begun with such high-falutin' talk ended with a pressing demand for a loan of one hundred francs.

We didn't meet again. A friend saw him the following month riding in a German car. He looked prosperous. I am convinced

that his essentially destructive mind eventually revolted against that terrible bed-bug-like quality of the German mind: insinuation. No man with a little grey matter can stand that too long.

On Monday we carried Dodo down, and Cooky went too. The disease caught him Sunday evening. I was in the room. He was running about sampling life with that joyous anticipation that was so much part of his make-up. All at once he stopped, lay down beside his sick mother as though a rope had pulled him. He lay there quietly, but full of revolt. So Monday he went for his last journey and Tuesday he was put out. He came to me in one of those vivid dreams I had later in the dirt and despair of prison, and said that he wanted to live as much as anybody else. I knew that. Docteur Briand was confident that Dodo would recover. She came home and the blinds of my flat were drawn because light hurt her eyes.

CHAPTER SIX

In my own little propaganda talks I was slowly making headway. The German *communiqués* were sinking English shipping at an amazing rate. I used to say that if you succeeded in adding up the total tonnage the Germans sank, not even a rowing-boat would be left in England. An acquaintance stopped me in the street and told me that if I added up the tonnage the Germans sank not even a rowing-boat would be left for England. As the average Parisian is hardly conversant with naval matters and shipping tonnage, I asked how he knew that. He said he heard it from so-and-so. So-and-so was the man to whom I made the remark.

There was shooting in the Bois de Boulogne. So the Germans put it out of bounds, and it was forbidden for civilians to enter it. The shooting of those Germans was in all likelihood carried out by Frenchmen; but it suited me to spread the rumour that it was done by British parachutists. I humbly apologize to the brave Frenchmen who did the shooting, but it was at the time of paramount importance for the French to realize there was an England and that England was fighting.

Before I push on to the darkening of the dark horizon there are

three little episodes I want to narrate. The first was when I acted as interpreter for a German official propaganda film producer. I met him in the normal way at *Joe's*, and when the ball of conversation started rolling he asked me if I would care to act as interpreter for him. He was there to meet a French cinema producer who wanted to submit to him a scenario for a *documentaire* about Paris. It sounded interesting, so I said yes, by all means. The man he was meeting lived on the Butte, and I knew him. Their talk was amusing. It showed how very much at cross purposes the French and Germans were. In that complete confusion of ideas I wasn't loath to play my part, and misinterpreting their words, I found delight in adding to it. Though it really wasn't needed.

The German was young and had quite a steady mind. For instance, he admitted that the German cinema was far behind the American because of politics and *Weltanschauung* that intruded into it. He had immense admiration for American producers and the kind of life the average American film depicts; a life of opulence with a lot of gadgets. Among young Germans that admiration for American life was rampant. Scores of them told me that after the war they would like to go to the States, or hoped that the American way of living would be introduced into Germany. By the American way of living they didn't mean what the Declaration of Independence meant; that goes without saying. But they were hungry for luxury, and to judge from the advertisements in American magazines America was luxury itself. The count had told me that Hitlerism was a creed for the middle aged, the vanquished and the bitter. Young Germany didn't want any more of it. He was right.

The French producer was a man who fought gallantly in the last war and now was ready to collaborate with the Germans. In his soul lived, too, the mentality of the grocer which to me is one of the chief causes of the collapse of France. Fear of reforms, fear of financial loss, and continuous counting of his few hatched eggs, and no adventurous longing for the unhatched ones.

The talk started with the Frenchman asking me to tell the German that if the Germans understood France and didn't humiliate her, they would find in France a ready ally against England. I translated that quite differently. I would have been ashamed to let the German see how deep some Frenchmen had sunk. The Germans were the first to despise such Frenchmen.

Then the German asked me to ask the Frenchman what exactly the reactions of the average Frenchman were to the Germans visiting Paris regularly every seventy years or so. Later the German

explained that he either wanted a *documentaire* that lasted for forty minutes, or something short to follow on at the end of a news-reel. Paris under German rule. The producer said he would get the scenario ready in a week's time, and we adjourned for a week. When we met again the scenario was ready. It began with an immense blur which was supposed to be a tear of Sainte-Geneviève, and as the tear dissolved there was a view of Paris from the Sacré-Cœur. The tear motif persisted all through the scenario. It was Paris in tears. No mention of the Germans. The tears were enough. The German told me the man was a fool. He wasn't interested in sentimental views of Paris. He didn't care a rap for tears. Why bring into it one of those dead Catholic saints? A lot of rubbish. What he wanted was a film about Germans in Paris, and the Germans mixing pleasantly with the natives and lots of love on both sides.

"He says," I translated, "that he thinks you're a fool, and as far as he and his country are concerned, you, France and Sainte-Geneviève, can weep till Doomsday. What he wants is a film about the victorious German Army that licked your Army in no time. He thinks you're too stupid to produce that."

The effect was instantaneous.

The producer rose with dignity and walked out. The comment of the German was that the French were still far from understanding that they were beaten, thrashed. That was rather true. The average member of the French middle classes seemed to think that Germany defeated only the Third Republic and now that Pétain had formed a congenial government everything was all right again. The Germans of 1918 thought so, too. They, however, had had a reason to think so; and the Allies proved they were right. The difference was this: whereas England started out for the peace treaty with 'Hang the Kaiser,' Germany encouraged France to think that she'd only been fighting the ally of England, the Third Republic. The 'Hang the Kaiser' fizzled out with the Allies having only fought Prussian militarism, but the *Weltanschauung* stunt was but the forerunner of the *Pax Germanica*. National Socialism was in many ways an export article. It came at a time when social discontent and economic strife were ripe everywhere, and it was listened to on account of that. Really and truly, it was the glove that hid the German fist. The men in France that fell for it unwittingly became traitors. National Socialism, as a doctrine, was the biggest and best-built Trojan Horse of history.

It catered for all tastes. The working classes got the Socialist sop and those who slept with woollen stockings under their pillows got

the bulwark-against-Communism myth. This brings me to my second episode.

I was asked to lunch in the house of a Frenchman I knew a bit in the old days when I was as yet a member of that highly respectable class—the foreigner who lived in France and spent the money he had or had earned abroad. This man was the owner of several *immeubles* in Paris and on the Riviera: he possessed as well a lot of black hair and a formidable paunch. He had been a staunch supporter of Flandin. His flat was a replica of himself. Lots of furniture and paintings, and nothing fine or interesting about them.

A German civilian was one of the guests at luncheon. Having by then acquired a considerable knowledge of Germans in Paris, I placed him at once as one of the Abetz crowd. I was right. Though the *gigot* was excellent, he didn't waste his time. Propaganda flowed from him. But here it was a different story. He spoke of less taxation, of the end of strikes, and of squashing Communism. The Frenchman nodded. A German victory seemed to him preferable to getting the *Front Populaire* back. Nothing surprising about that. A French colonel had said the same to me in June. The colonel had looked at it from a different point of view. He shuddered because of the corruption—money for national defence going into the pockets of the friends and supporters of the régime lowered production and inefficiency; but mine host had no such scruples. For him, it was a matter of financial security and as long as he had that, France could go to the devil.

I reminded the German of the Russo-German treaty. He said the Führer knew what he was doing. The day would come when Russia would get what *Mein Kampf* had promised. It surprised him that the world hadn't understood yet that we were living that book. That brought back to me a remark I made a little while ago. A friend of mine, an author, recently demobilized, asked me what I was reading nowadays. I answered him, "Why read when you live a book," the book being *Mein Kampf*. Now, I said, Hitler spoke very differently to the French from the way he spoke of them in his book. The German said the Führer was making handsome amends for having misjudged the French. He went on to depict the gorgeous capitalistic world that would follow the defeat of England. Here England stood for Communism and other evil things.

"You must understand," the German said, "that we must flatter the workmen because we need them to produce armaments, but I can assure you that once peace is here they'll be curbed."

The Frenchman drank in his words.

The German and I left together. On the stairs he said to me:

"*Was wissen diese dummen Franzosen was sie noch leiden werden.*" He also said that Germany was a Socialist state, and if you saw these French *bourgeoisie* clinging to their money it made you positively sick. In the evening I rang up the Frenchman and repeated these words to him. He got nasty and said he didn't believe a word I said. I was a *sale Anglais*, and he put down the receiver with a bang. I couldn't hear the bang, but I felt it all right.

The third episode was different. A Prussian Junker belonging to the class that had ruled Germany for such a long period came to *Joe's* and because he had a lot of drink in him, and because, I imagine, he took a liking to me, he spoke very bluntly against his own country. It began with him asking for a certain restaurant where, so he was informed, Tsarist officers congregated. I didn't know the restaurant, though I used to know hundreds of White Russians.

"If I find it," he said, "I don't suppose I will be well received. Those men have every right to dislike me who belong to a nation that's practically the ally of Soviet Russia. We're a despicable nation. For years we bang the table and shout that Communism is our enemy, and then we go and ally ourselves with it." He ordered champagne, and made the remark that Germany had produced the three most dislikeable men of history: Luther, Marx, and Hitler.

"Don't speak so loud," I said. "The Gestapo might hear you."

It was an amusing situation. But he spoke loud. He contended that the Germans were a nation of suicides. Whenever in history Germany began to rise she went and committed suicide. The Thirty Years' War was a striking example of how Germany dealt with herself if the chance were given her. Because he spoke so freely I ventured to remark that if Germany wanted to kill herself it was her sovereign right to do so, and I doubted that anybody would feel like stopping her. As a painter, I explained, I could even see dark red beauty in the suicide of a people, but why did Germany want to kill everybody around her before she finished off herself? Deep from the cup came the answer.

"What right has the rest of the world to live if we die because we don't know how to live?"

It was putting it in an honest fashion. Though, as the clock ticks on, I find less and less time for such utterances, I couldn't then but shudder with masochistic admiration at such a picture. Let everybody perish because I don't know what to make of life! But my admiration went as my mind recalled that this sort of German bunkum had caused more misery in this world than anything else. It may be sincere, but that's no excuse.

He had no illusions about the war. It would last a long time, and

perhaps it would finish in Australia at an equally distant date. Then there would be despair in Germany and the suicide would once more be complete.

"So England is going to win?" I said.

He was drunk. Tears came into his eyes.

"We were only made to fight, but not to win."

He was a short man with the red face of a jockey. He slobbered a little, then went. I saw him again, and he was sober and spoke in a similar vein. Anyway, he taught me that the *Weltschmerz* side of the Germans was but self-pity: pity for the poor German who doesn't succeed in killing off the rest of the world. This nice little man showed me a more terrible side of the German psyche than many suave propagandists.

A great friend of mine, Harry, came back from the war. He was of English origin but born in France. He fought in the last war, gallantly, of course, and now at the age of forty-four he had lost his leg. But, as he put it to me, he would gladly lose his other leg if the Boches could be swept out of France. His case showed that under the *Révolution Nationale*, which Déat called much more appropriately *la petite terreur blanche de Vichy*, little had changed. He was penniless and first went to what was left in Paris of the French War Office, and was told that since he was reported missing they could do nothing for him. He couldn't get his *prime de démobilisation* before that was cleared up. That would take months and months: trust red tape for that. So Harry went to the *Ministère des Pensions* and there he was listened to politely, and because they had pity on him for his hair, that during the ordeal had turned white, they gave him a chit to a soup kitchen for a plate of soup. Harry threw it into their faces and his crutches tapped out of the ministry. Most Frenchmen at the time would have said—indeed, most of them said it—that the Germans were a pleasant alternative to that kind of *pourriture*; but Harry was made of the real stuff. He said, whenever he heard such comments that even if his own country was rotten—rotten in official quarters—it wasn't an excuse to hobnob with the enemy.

He received his wound on 16th May. He was out on patrol. He was riding a bicycle. He entered a village that was supposed to be far from the fighting lines. As he got to the main square and turned into a side street, from both sides of the road machine-guns fired at him. He went on for a few hundred yards and then fell off his bike. He lay in the ditch, with sixteen wounds in his right leg, for two days; then the Germans picked him up. They treated him well;

and now he was sent back. He told me many stories of the first days of the spring campaign. Once he was looking into a field and there he saw a priest walking about with a *mitraillette*. A parachutist!

It was very difficult to get a real picture of that campaign. You heard the most bewildering tales. The Foreign Legion, somewhere on the Loire, had held out a fortnight after the armistice; the *maire* of Tours resisted with the civilian population for three days. Those tales I was only too glad to believe. There was, however, a dialogue between Harry and one of his friends that I heard. It staggered me. Said the friend:

"You remember I came to you on the 15th and told you I pinched a car and asked you to come with me. I got as far as Avignon without a mishap and had you listened to me you'd still have your leg." Harry answered: "But it was my duty to stay. I was a soldier." "So was I, but I wasn't a fool to stay on." As I say, it was astonishing.

Then we sat one evening, Harry and I, outside the *Mère Cathérine*. A drunken, elderly beggar stopped and said, "Thank God we of 1914 weren't such cowards as those of 1940." Harry, with his amputated leg hurting like hell, answered, "But we of 1870 were cowards, too." I rather liked that.

Another friend, an officer, turned up. He had been wounded too. He had also been looked after by the Germans. He was lying on the road with a chest wound when a German destroyer-tank roared along. The tank stopped, the hood was lifted and a German asked him in French if he was French or English. He said he was French and the German gave him first-aid and waited till a car came up and the car took him to a German clearing-station. In the hospital he was with an R.A.F. officer whose plane had crashed. When my friend was released by the Germans he went to say good-bye to the Englishman. He said he was going back to Paris. They shook hands and the Englishman said that though he expected to be a prisoner for a very long time he wouldn't change with him. For his country was free and fighting. "I was ashamed of being French," my friend said. I, on the other hand, was proud of England. To those Frenchmen who spoke thus I usually said there was General de Gaulle who was saving the name and honour of France.

General de Gaulle, as my charwoman put it, was the only excuse for being French. The loss of life in the spring campaign must have been slight. Of the many people I knew there was but one case of killed in action. The Alsatian husband of an American woman. Of wounded there were a few, but almost everybody had either a son, a husband, or a brother who was a prisoner.

Soldiers and civilians were drifting back at an ever increasing rate. The deadness that had become Paris before the occupation was giving way to a kind of life. In July there had been a census. About a million and half people were left in the capital. They were coming back and those from the unoccupied zone spoke with disgust of life there. They said it was better to be in Occupied France; there you at least knew where you were. Though few of them spoke disrespectfully of Pétain, they loathed Laval and all he stood for. Like those who are past caring, they waited for England to be defeated. In vain I argued that as long as there was a navy England couldn't be defeated. The answer was that modern aerial bombardment couldn't be resisted, especially by a people like the British, who didn't know what war at home meant. I heatedly argued to the contrary and again and again deplored that lack of knowledge the French had of England. Two countries linked by so many ties and yet total strangers!

Hard days those were, and my only consolation was the many talks I used to have with my old American friend, Mr. Squibb. He was wont to walk about the Butte, a little bent with eighty-two long years, a beret on his head, and with his stick shove the Germans out of his way. He had no doubts about the final outcome of the war.

"John Bull," he said, "starts slowly but once the bulldog gets his teeth in, you can't stop him. He'll never let go."

Days were getting harder. The future was a wall, and more and more it seemed terrible to me to be outside England in her hour of genuine peril. In Paris you were in a backwater. As Robert, the fresh admirer of Germany, put it, it was marvellous to get out of the war without even having seen a corpse. In the rue Norvins, as I was walking along, a cage complete with canary fell on me from a window. I put up my arm and got a little bruise from the impact. The canary died, and I said bitterly to myself that that bruise would be the only wound this war had in store for me.

My propaganda talks were rising in volume. Though I was careful to say nothing that could be disproved, clumsy lies being the worst sort of propaganda, I now was concentrating on discrediting the Germans. I was known to be a lot with them, so I was believed when I spread the rumour (if it's told in thirty different pubs the rumour does spread) that I had it on good authority that the High Command planned to be in London on 15th August. Came 15th August, and nothing of the sort happened. So the Germans were liars, braggarts, as the defunct regime had been.

I also whispered of French resistance that was poking up its head here and there. It's a strong point when convincing a Frenchman of something to tell him that another Frenchman had done it. It's not the herd instinct. It's a matter of trust.

No, London wasn't taken on 15th August, but on the night of the 22nd a great blow came my way. Dodo seemed to be getting better, then she was worse, and I took her down to Docteur Briand and he examined her and said she was better. It didn't appear so to me, and I carried her back in my arms and I couldn't but notice how light she was and I hadn't to stop at all on the endless steps to regain my breath. The first time we went down she seemed to weigh a ton. But there was hope said the vet. It's an acknowledged fact that life walks hand-in-hand with hope. But there was very little of life left in her. She couldn't move her hind-legs and I gave her electrical massage. She got it every day, stood it patiently, and if our eyes met I had to turn mine away. The message in hers was so terribly clear. She was patient and sad. Her life now was but a round of patience with a heavy dose of sadness. I used to sit for hours and hours beside her in the darkened room, and felt there was no desire in her to go on. She'd been life itself. To watch that thin little body and to compare it with that vigorous person full of mischief that used to roll in the snow in Aix-les-Bains was a difficult task. Incidents of her past life would float back to me, her shrewdness, her sense of humour and her utter devotion. I would look up and see those feverish eyes resting on me with only one thought in them. Eloquently those eyes pleaded: please let me go, our time is up.

I would get up, go down and sell my daily quota of water-colours to the enemy.

On the night of 21st August, I came home with the curfew and from the stairs could hear Dodo barking. I rushed up to her. She was in agony and no longer recognized me. I couldn't go to get the vet because of the curfew, so all I could do was to sit beside her. I put a pillow under her head. At regular intervals she lifted her head and barked a challenge that now meant nothing any more. Towards morning her barking got hardly audible and as the hour of nine came with all the sunshine on the other side of the curtain her ruffled coat got smooth, her tail that hadn't been visible for weeks and weeks rose, her orchid-like ears came up, and she was dead. Obeying an impulse I could hardly explain, I got up and went to the window and lifted the curtain. The light streamed into the room, and I felt something swishing past me. An immense lightness settled

down on the room. It was her dear soul that flew out of it. Thus died my friend.

Victor Gilles, that gifted pianist, told me when I related her death to him that her ears went up like that because she beheld *la lumière éternelle*. I know that.

With Dodo gone there was no earthly reason left to go on making money. Nona's mother was getting some money through from the States, so Nona needn't starve. As a gesture of thanks to Robert, who had carried Dodo down to the vet, I sold one more picture to the Germans; thereafter I preferred to sit down and starve rather than go on with being the Montmartre *Maler*. For two days I didn't move out of the house and though the second day I went hungry I thoroughly enjoyed not seeing any Germans. It was important for me to concentrate on matters that could absorb me enough and keep me from grieving.

So I reviewed those unbelievable two months and tried to tabulate them in my mind. The first point, I said to myself, was that the Germans were shrewd people. I used to hear a lot about their martial qualities, their savagery, but this shrewdness hadn't been harped on. The hundreds of long talks I had with them were forming themselves into a pattern. The simple Germans weren't subtle. They believed now in Hitler as they'd believed two decades ago in the Kaiser. They were ready to die for their Führer, no doubt about that. Their morale was surprisingly good and there was no hope for a collapse. The morale was based on an utter lack of thinking individually. It was surprising with how much personal conviction they held forth on matters that were hammered into them. You visibly saw the thought coming into being; and every particle of the thought belonged to Hitler, to Goebbels, and the rest of them. Nothing was their own. I met exceptions, that goes without saying, but they were so few that they couldn't ruffle that sea of self-satisfaction.

Self-satisfaction and insinuation. The two most conspicuous German characteristics. Even among the simplest of them there was a complete disregard of truth and of the light thereof. To emphasize his argument about *perfide Albion* and treacherous Mr. Chamberlain, a German private, spluttering with indignation, told me that the British material they'd captured in Flanders was new, made after Munich. "Think of it," he said, "that old man with the umbrella came whining to us and begged for mercy, our Führer graciously gave him mercy and the treacherous old man goes back to his country and arms behind our backs."

This from a simple Pomeranian peasant.

But among their betters, subtlety and shrewdness were rampant. A German civilian, a professor at a minor university, who was in Paris on some *Kultur* mission, was deeply disgusted by French servility. As a contrast, he explained how Germany had sabotaged the Treaty of Versailles from the start. The Weimar Republic had many grave faults, but under the circumstances it did its best to keep the frame of the Army intact and the German spirit too. I put to him the question whether republican Germany would have gone to war, too. He said naturally, and added that it would have taken longer and would have been a less efficient war. To wage modern war you need a dictatorship; hence came the Führer and his crew. Was war a necessity? Why war? I got the already several times quoted reply. A world of plenty, the Garden of Eden, fulfilment of the German dream and the rest of the bag of tricks. The professor sported a beard, had kindly blue eyes and looked as peace should look. His speciality was Greek art. I inquired if Goethe would be a Nazi if he was alive. The professor nodded emphatically. Rather a pity. I could now say that for the Germans war stood for salvation. Undoubtedly so. But my interest was more focused for the moment on the relationship of Germany as a war-waging nation to the *Weltanschauung* as preached by Goebbels, Rosenberg, and the early Hitler.

Men of the lower middle classes, between the age of thirty-five and forty-five, were Nazis. Men of the last war, men of whom Hans Fallada wrote *Little Man, What Now?* But even these men continuously mixed up Hitler with Wotan, so to speak. They went over to Hitler because they were unemployed and because having fought the last war they knew they were beaten. Not only by advertised starvation, but beaten in the field by Foch, Weygand, and Haig. Beaten by the French, the British, and the Americans. Whenever I was constrained to listen to their long explanations of sabotage behind the lines I gathered clearly they were but camouflaging the truth of their defeat. Those men needed the paraphernalia of National Socialism to forget the truth and believe the lie. Left alone, lying was an uphill task, but with flags and shirts and bands it was easy. Then the nineteen-twenties, with D. H. Lawrence and the Saint Louis Blues, were too much given to individual thinking. That didn't suit them. But came Hitler, who more or less said: Why think? I can save you from thought. I'll make you march and counter-march till you completely forget that overrated exercise. Overrated, indeed; for thought walks hand in hand with memories; and the memories weren't too good. Men of the upper classes who belonged to the same age group were similarly

inclined. With them, however, it wasn't the gospel itself, though it did their conceit a lot of good, and as a memory eraser Hitlerism was the thing. Especially as fearing for their property (the grocer has no nationality) they had gone a bit too far in the early post-war days. Colonel Repington, whom Hitler quotes in *Mein Kampf*, said one out of every three Germans was a traitor. It's not so easy to forget nasty matters and, with all the circumlocution in the world, the German couldn't deny that he was a cringing, beaten man in 1919. Hitler's doctrine was the sponge to wipe out the past.

Hence, after careful consideration, I reached the conclusion that the real strutting Nazis were rooted in the past, and for them a new defeat would be nothing new, therefore the more terrible. I've ridden and jumped more horses than there are stars at first glance, and I know what a horse feels as he rises over a jump that had sent him sprawling the last time. Owing to that fear he jumps higher and often that is the cause of his coming a cropper again. So musing, and staring at the wall on the other side of the window, it seemed to me that the real Nazi would be the man who would lose his bearings the quickest if it came to a real reckoning. That reckoning would come if England held out till 15th September. Since July that was the date I fixed in my mind.

The young Germans believed in Hitler. Their belief was implicit, but the mystical swastika was the national flag of Germany for them; nothing less and nothing more. It stood for the simple, straightforward German creed: war and world dominion on the other side of it. The great exception was the High Command, which had never wavered (the least in the forest of Compiègne on 11th November, 1918), and took to Hitler because his hocus-pocus furthered its aims.

This for Nazism as it is, or rather was, known outside Germany. The young knew about the last war only what propaganda had told them. They wore brown shirts in their early 'teens, they goose-stepped and waved flags to their hearts' content. They didn't need the lugubrious Klu Klux Klan stuff. They and the Army were waging an old-fashioned German war, the kind of war Austria, Denmark and now France, for the third time, got in seventy or so years. For me, looking at it from England's point of view, Nazism was a negligible quantity, though with the anti-Nazi label it had exported many dangerous Fifth Columnists. The only thing that was to be watched with interest was the subterranean fight between the Army and the Party. But they'd a lot in common and the old Latin proverb that *manus manum lavat* held good. The Gestapo, though disliked by the Army, was useful to stop subversive action,

and the Gestapo licked its chops in advance, visualizing the virgin conquered territories the Army would give it. A dismal and horrible alliance, and till the end of the world the people of this earth would have to be grateful to England for having resisted it. The immense advantage of the Nazi racket was that it hid in the eye of the innocent and credulous the time-worn German aim. Men of defeated France asked themselves whether they should be Nazis or not. That was a matter open for discussion. They didn't ask whether they were going to remain Frenchmen or become German slaves, and that was a great gain for Germany. The *Weltanschauung* brought confusion and they profited by it.

Of confusion there was plenty. There were Frenchmen who said that now that England and Germany would fight it out France would have time to recuperate. In time, France would come out victorious and strong. They believed it, and very few understood what defeat meant. Somehow they thought the Germans were there but to purge France of her corrupt politicians of yore. A ludicrous example of that utter lack of grasping the facts was shown to me. Needless to say, it amused me. It also showed in the same amusing fashion that once the French opened their eyes they'd never tolerate the Germans.

The prostitutes on the Butte were raided by the French police every fortnight or so. Black Marias would stop outside *bistros* and they would be rounded up and bundled into those nasty black cars. They were examined by a police doctor and the sick ones were sent to hospital and the healthy ones would be back among us in more or less a jiffy. These raids became more frequent because the Germans complained of frequent venereal cases among the troops. Then one day the Germans got tired of the French method of dealing with the ladies, and the next time the Black Marias stopped outside the *bistros* there were Gestapo men with them. About eighty women were taken away, and, from the feminine point of view, for a few days the Butte regained its pre-Occupation appearance. Of course, the women who weren't sick had to be released. I spoke to one of them and she was indignant. Not because the police had taken her away: she took that philosophically—the rough-and-tumble of her profession—but that the Germans dared to poke their noses into a purely internal French affair was too much. She was red with rage as she asked me what was France coming to if such things were permitted.

'Awake, France, and open thine eyes!' I said; and in a way I was grateful I was born a Hungarian, for the Hungarians knew for five

hundred years what Germanic rule meant. Perhaps that was the reason I saw it clearly from the start. That Hungary was roped in twice in two decades to fight with Germany was the biggest tragedy of that tragic nation.

After two days of doing nothing, and now and then forced to look my sorrow square in the eye, Robert came. I told him I was through with the water-colours and he didn't mind too much. He was making money on the black market which, owing to the shortage in most things, was expanding rapidly. Robert's delicate pro-German soul apparently didn't shrink from that degrading trade. He came to give me advice.

"Peter," he said, "you'll end up by being shot, and you don't want that."

"No," I said.

"Then first of all you and Nona must stop speaking of the Germans in public as you do. You call them Boches, and they hear it. But the thing that will get you into hot water is that talking all over the place. We all know what you're doing and you know what the Germans are going to do if they catch you at it. To spread false rumours. Anyway, what are you going to do? You can't sit here eternally."

"I want to get to England, I must get to England. Now that Dodo is dead, there's nothing to hold me."

Robert decided to be sarcastic. "There's one way of getting to England. Go through Russia and Siberia and then take a boat at Vladivostock to California, and from California travel to New York, and there take boat again, and by the time you get to London you can start selling water-colours again, because you'll find the Germans there."

But I was immune to that sort of talk. I'd swallowed a lot in two months. It only made my anger deeper and slowly my petty little self was giving way to something I never suspected existed in me.

I had another visit that day. It was from Mr. Squibb, who said he was again getting money regularly from America, and he would let me have two thousand francs a month till I found a way out. God bless him for it. So I was abroad again and it was time, too. The Blitz had started.

CRESCENDO

CHAPTER SEVEN

After a long interval I went down to Paris. It was still the Paris that had been raped two months ago, but it had settled down under the boot, and if Sainte-Geneviève shed tears nobody appeared to bother about them. The German boot was the chief feature. All the hotels were requisitioned, apart from the Ritz and the Bristol, in the rue du Faubourg de Saint-Honoré. The rue Boissy d'Anglas was roped off, so was the Avenue Kléber where, in the Majestic, the Quarter-Master General's staff was. The swastika was flown only on buildings where German officers were. I say only because as I looked down from the Place de la Concorde to the rue de Rivoli I saw a forest of German flags. I walked through that forest. W. H. Smith's bookshop, where not so many months ago my novel, *Children, My Children*, was displayed in the shop window, was now the German Army's book centre. I stopped.

To judge from the shop window the Germans were going in for humour heavily. One book was called *500 Jokes for Artillery Men*, another declared it contained 300 jokes for infantry men; there were jokes for the *Panzertruppen* and funny stories for the *Luftwaffe*. On the covers of those books there stood a couple of Huns enjoying jokes. I shall never forgive myself for not going in and buying a couple of hundred jokes for paratroops or something. As a matter of fact, I felt a bit light in the head, and hurried away. Too many jokes, I suppose.

Like a pilgrim seeking out devastated shrines, I went past the British Embassy. A notice on the locked gate said it was under American protection. The *Elysée* had been left alone, too, but the *Ministère de l'Intérieur* sported at the gate the standard of the German G.O.C. Paris. Sentries; but there were sentries everywhere. Nona, having once witnessed the change of guards outside The Claridge, described it thus: "There were two soldiers goose-stepping towards each other, and between them, in the middle, a sergeant was goose-stepping all on his own."

At the Madeleine and at the Etoile there were German traffic signs: *Nach* Saint-Cloud and *Nach* Saint-Germain. At the top end of the Champs Elysées the large dog shop that used to sell Poodles and Aberdeen Terriers by the dozen, now only stocked Schnauzers, Dachshunds and Dobbermanns. The German Pay Corps was at the Lloyds and National Provincial Foreign Bank on the Boulevard Haussmann, and on the wall of the building was an

interesting notice. "To tear down the official posters of the occupation forces will be considered sabotage and dealt with accordingly." They were tightening up, no mistake about that. Certain cafés were taken over by the Germans. "Civilians not admitted." I have it on good authority that the same notice was on the doors of the brothels of Paris. They were completely under German control; but there remained one that had the notice up that here civilians were received. I went back to the Butte.

The Blitz had started. My friend, Henri, the royalist, told me, with tears in his eyes, that the people of England were putting up the finest show in history. He said it was the greatest personal satisfaction to him. I nodded. It was the same to me. Henri said this washed out all the insults that we, the faithful, had received. I said indeed it did. Now I had plenty to talk about in pubs and wherever I went. The papers were bombing England out of existence. London was going and the end of England had come. The people of Paris watched it and in the beginning said nothing. Then suddenly, beautifully suddenly, they exclaimed *les Anglais tiennent le coup*. And now they saw that for centuries they had misjudged the English. The reproaches about *toujours les poitrines françaises* ceased. Now it was proven England wasn't cant: she could fight without fighting till the last Frenchman. And, because France was coming out of her lethargy, the hatred of Germans came into its own. It became a vicious circle, for English resistance hardened the Boche and since English A.A. guns and fighters curbed his bad temper he vented it on the French. The transition period from the moral collapse to the resurrection of French sentiment lasted from the middle of August till the middle of September; from September onward it was the real France again, the France that is an eternal asset to this globe of ours.

Nobody knows his own shortcomings better than I know mine, but I also know that I couldn't be successfully accused of lack of restraint—in writing at any rate. Hence I usually become wary of big words. I appreciate the responsibility of using a word of such great portent as eternal. Pain and frustration seem eternal; but of such frail human concepts as a nation that word should hardly be used. Yet I, to whom it was vouchsafed to see the resurrection of the French spirit, must now believe that France is something eternal. Eternal within our mortal eternity. In history there's no parallel to it. Whenever a nation has fallen so ignominiously and with such a crash, that nation has gone. I don't think that Byzantium was riper for death than the France of June 1940. The Byzantines fought, at least; generally speaking, the French didn't. Byzantium

went. But, lo! three months after her death France was stirring again. Of course, I only speak of Occupied France.

The primary cause was the heroic resistance of England. To me it will remain an unsolved mystery why the French never believed in England once the peacemakers were gone, why English aims and English motives were distrusted and misconstrued. Umpteen times I was told during my endless arguments that it didn't very much matter whether France would remain an English colony or a German protectorate. That sort of talk was going; and the Germans helped. As a French friend put it, "Leave it to the Germans and they'll make us love England." Simultaneously, with the change in the French came a change in the Germans, too. The eyes of the Germans were opening.

When Germany took Paris she was convinced the war was won. Paris had appeared to them the gateway to the German Paradise. With Paris behind you there was but Paradise before you and around you, too. Now they were three long months undisputed masters of Paris and Paradise was still in the offing. That irritated them. Their great hopes had been fulfilled, and fulfilment left them where they previously were. The war was going on just the same, and it might be a long war. Fear of a long war was tantamount to fear of defeat.

Four or five soldiers came on a wet September day into *Joe's*, and because I was free of the Montmartre *Maler* I could afford to listen to them and not to have to chat with them. It was bliss. I emphasize they were usually very polite, yet it had been a continual effort to have talks with them once my initial curiosity had worn off; mostly because of their heaviness.

So I listened to them, and they were telling Joe never to mind, the war would be over by November.

"November?" I said. "November of which year?"

"A stupid question," one of the soldiers said. "November 1940."

"This war is going to last five years," I said.

The effect was instantaneous. They got furious and called me a spreader of false rumours and spoke harshly, calling me many names. One of them even asked for my identity papers. Since it had always been plain sailing, their words didn't frighten me, and I refused to show my papers. "None of your business," I said. There is a queer German sense of *Gerechtigkeit*. One of the soldiers said that I was right, it wasn't their business. This incident shows how they feared the idea of a long war. They feared it; but only a fool would have accused them of not standing up to it.

I said the same to a young Rhinelander who belonged to the clan

of eternal seekers—always serious and ready to consider anything—ready to write a long, well-documented book on homosexuality among bed-bugs. Some American professors have inherited that Teutonic *Forschung* complex.

"Five years," he said, and thought for a while. Having finished thinking he turned back to me and said, "In that case we're lost."

First, little incidents marked the change of times. French women were the advance guard of French resurrection. But the women had been splendid all along. After this war in Paris there should be a memorial erected to the unknown woman who, with either her husband or son a prisoner, little food and constant worries, was courageous, nay, a heroine.

Yes, hope was flickering back. The English were resisting, the Germans would be defeated in the long run. But the night was getting darker too and you looked right and left for signs of hope. The smallest thing cheered you. A friend of mine discovered a book, the history of the Butte up to the end of the last century. There were a few illustrations in the book. My friend brought the book along and said, "I'm going to show you something that's going to put you in a good mood for the rest of the day. It cheered me up tremendously when I saw it for the first time. It still does." He showed me one of the illustrations. It depicted the Duke of Wellington in 1815 reviewing British troops on the Place du Tertre. Needless to say, it put me into a good mood for the rest of the day.

The prophecies of Nostradamus were immensely popular. Serious people would quote him as a final authority on the impending downfall of the Germans. But, I repeat, the greatest of it all was the resistance of England during the Blitz.

Stories were afoot of German losses in aircraft. I could exaggerate them because they couldn't be disproved. Anyway, they didn't need much exaggeration. The English were bombing Germany. They bombed France, too. The French wished they would bomb it more often.

One night, far back in dark July, I had heard the whirr of an English fighter. The German A.A. guns went off. They sounded more business-like than the French used to be. Seldom in my life had I prayed with such vigorous fervour as I prayed while that lone fighter moved across the sky of Paris. Foolishly enough it had seemed to me that if the Germans brought it down France would never believe in England. The plane wasn't brought down.

Nowadays you could hear the R.A.F. very often. There was a night when I listened for about an hour to waves and waves of

bombers going over Villacoublay. Next morning my charwoman said it was the finest music she had heard in her life.

The first English leaflet I saw was around that time too. It was a poor effort. It pained me to read its ponderous, elephantine message. Yet my charwoman thought it very beautiful. Michel, however, had seen it, too. He said the English were still sitting in arm-chairs and smoking expensive cigars.

The German *communiqués*, though couched in appropriate language, weren't as happy as they wished to be. By now the Germans were accredited liars. Their *communiqués* weren't believed. Here the late Daladier-Reynaud information service had rendered the country signal service. Its lies had so discredited all *communiqués* that disbelief easily extended to the German news. Thus, when a German *communiqué* stated that Birmingham had been heavily bombed, and quoted the words of a German group captain as saying that A.A. barrage was poor but fighter resistance was strong, the good Parisians laughed and said all German bombers must have been shot down. I used to see German bomber formations flying over Paris on their way to bomb England. The fighter escorts were imposing. If curses had any value mine would surely have brought down the lot of them, bombers and fighters alike.

Winston Churchill was becoming very popular. Now he was being remembered as a real friend of France and the man who understood from the start what Germany stood for. Said a workman to me in a pub, "Churchill would never have signed the Anglo-German Naval Pact." That was a sore point, too, with the French. As bad as the remilitarization of the Rhineland.

In the cafés of Paris a tune was rather popular that began like this:

Quand vient le crépuscule
Le contrebandier. . . .

I don't remember how it went on, but I very much remember a new set of words Paris coined in September. You heard it everywhere. It began like this:

Quand vient le crépuscule
Churchill et ses bombardiers
Donnent à Hitler une pilule. . . .

But I can't leave Mr. Churchill without relating a little scene I witnessed in a Montmartre bar during that glorious and terrible period of the beginning of the Battle of Britain. That bar, like most bars, was small. The proprietor was from Auvergne, like Laval, and

he had lived a long time in England. He used to be a waiter. That was long before the First German World War. He had been a waiter in a famous London hotel.

I walked into the bar and, owing to its small size, it seemed pretty crowded. The customers were German soldiers. There was complete silence. The proverbial pin would have been ashamed to drop. The noise my entrance made was acknowledged with angry frowns. Then, when I sat down, the silence returned. The Germans craned their necks and drunk in the words of the pub-keeper. He was telling them of Mr. Churchill, whom he had served many times in the grill room of the hotel he worked in. How he ordered his meals, what he ate, what he drank, what he said and when exactly he lit his cigar. I have heard such eager silence in church, but seldom in lay life. I left before, so to speak, the debate opened. The utter silence remained with me. Very interesting the whole scene was.

As August turned into September German tempers got frayed. They began to repent of their good behaviour towards the French. My lieutenant-colonel, who was now moving to Poland, confided in me the last time I saw him that the French were getting fresh. Stories of German soldiers being shot were all over the town. How many of those stories were true I couldn't tell, but one night at *Joe's* a German soldier who was ready to go lingered on conspicuously. He put on his coat, put on his cap, and then stood irresolute at the door, and finally asked Joe to accompany him to his car, which was outside on the square.

"I don't like going about in the dark here," he said. "Several of my comrades have been shot here in Paris." The man had undeniably a sense of *Gerechtigkeit*, for he added, "I can't blame them. We did the same during the occupation of the Rhineland."

Of deserters rumour spoke too. One deserter came my way. A sergeant of the *Luftwaffe*, accompanied by two other ranks, came into a pub where I happened to be, and there they decided that each of them should have his own special, separate fun and they would meet in the same pub the second day. The men were rather pathetic when they spent the second day in the pub waiting for the sergeant. He never turned up. They left in the evening, but next day were back and asked whether the sergeant had been seen. They were worried and thought he met with an accident.

"Don't be foolish," I said. "He deserted because he didn't want to be shot down by the Spitfires." The soldiers said that it just showed that I was a damned Frenchman because any German knew that a German didn't desert. Nevertheless, they were somewhat

downhearted. With real German thoroughness they came a week later and asked if the sergeant had been seen. No, he hadn't been seen.

As the resistance of the resurrected French soul hardened so did the rift deepen between those who believed in England and General de Gaulle and the clan that was called *les vendus*. To be *anglophile* or *anglophobe* ceased to be a topic of conversation over an apéritif; now it was a matter of deadly earnestness. The opposite camps glared at each other—one was accused of being bought by the English, the other of being traitors. Many of the latter were automatically sliding towards real treason. Anyway, they began to denounce their fellow-countrymen.

Most of those that I knew had started out with disgust for the late government, and resentment against England for having encouraged the Germans since Versailles, but now they had gone so far that they had to carry on to justify themselves—in their own eyes and underneath the German boot. There was no stopping—such people are incapable of stopping—the result was that they were more vehemently pro-German than the Germans themselves. That sounds tall, yet their name was legion. Its hotbed was the smugness and materialistic mind of the upper middle classes, and the intellectuals who went over at the beginning. Daily they got more and more involved, and where German propaganda failed to help them they invented it. Abetz had gained more than he'd expected, but only in certain circles. The effect was that Paris was literally rent asunder.

Robert and Michel were the best examples. Robert had completely assimilated the Abetz creed. He saw himself as the favourite Greek slave, and we were drifting apart. With Michel it was well-nigh worse. I dined one night in his house. Through the rosy, darkening sky a German bomber sailed. It was large and conspicuous because of the rosy peacefulness of the sky. Michel looked at it and then exclaimed: "And to think that these *braves gens* are actually fighting our battle." I think he could have wept with gratitude. I left in disgust; the usual disgust, but I dined no more in his house.

In the general run I respect an opponent's views even if I wish to kill him for them. In many ways I respected some German qualities, though at night I dreamed of bombs dropping on German towns and abolishing them completely with mothers and children lying dead under the ruins, and my one great wish was to see one, only one, shell burst on a marching German column and then I would die satisfied. Michel and I used to be friends, and I had admired his

talents and taste in art. Now, however, we used to go for each other like real enemies. It was no longer a matter of personal opinion. This life of his meant death to me and *vice versa*.

Harry wouldn't go near them. Pedro ceased to come to the Butte. The workmen and charwomen said that there weren't enough trees on the Place du Tertre to hang them all when retribution came. People were talking frankly on both sides. Joe—for this was the time of choosing; you ceased sitting on the fence—was coming round. Having watched the Germans at close quarters for three months, he came to loathe them, too. In a sense it's almost a shame that, however hard they try, dislike dogs the Germans; perhaps because they try so earnestly. But it wasn't only that with Joe. The *esprit de l'épicier* was with him as with most Frenchmen of some property. He had been making good money the first two months. Paris was theirs, England was falling, and peace was at the end of the short victorious road. But as the people of England got the Blitz, and not only got it but knew how to take it and even hit back, then the German purse tightened. They bargained, wouldn't pay their bills; in short, the famous correctness fizzled out. They were dishonest, too. They were remarkably good bicycle thieves. But they were good in other walks of infamy, too. I heard complaints right and left. If a large party of Germans went into a restaurant there were always a few that managed to get away without payment. In shops they indulged in shoplifting. The halcyon days of German spending were definitely over.

The cock is a Gallic emblem and it was a cock that finally brought Joe over. That cock had belonged to his father-in-law, a peasant who farmed about sixty miles west of Paris. Searching for food to be hoarded was the general pastime, and on one of his search expeditions to his father-in-law Joe returned with that cock. The cock, he declared, would only be eaten when real starvation set in. He kept the bird in the backyard and grew fond of it. Like most Parisians, he was a countryman at heart, and it delighted him to hear the cock crow early before dawn. I suppose he turned on his other side with the happy thought sending him back to sleep that he was back in his village and soon would drive the cow into the meadow. Be that as it may, he used to go into the backyard and carry on long talks with the cock. Then, God knows how, but a German soldier got into the backyard and pinched the cock. He took it away under his great-coat and Joe was heartbroken. Now he said, *Vive le Général de Gaulle*, and wanted England to win the war.

He was a man with a conscience, hence he was still sceptical about England's love for her disloyal ally. England had made

Germany strong and had hindered France in taking the necessary measures to keep that monster down. We were sitting outside the pub and the sun was out and Joe was speaking.

"Who stopped Foch from marching to Berlin? England. Who helped the Germans? England. Who made a naval pact behind France's back? England. Who stopped Weygand from marching into the Rhineland in '36? England. Who . . ."

". . . is going to save France? England."

We looked up. An elderly man with a smiling face was beaming on us.

"Sorry to butt in," he said, "but I couldn't help overhearing you. England, and only England, will save us. *Oui, messieurs.*"

He walked away. This was Paris two and a half months after I was kicked out of a restaurant because they thought I was English.

Since rumour is the best and most effective sort of propaganda, I watched with keen interest the rise of anti-German rumours. They were a sign of the times, too. There was a story that went the round of Paris and made a deep impression on all and sundry. To me, even in retrospect, it makes no sense. Nevertheless, it had a rousing effect on everybody but me.

The Germans, so went the story, put on an aerodrome a few wooden dummy planes. The R.A.F. came over and dropped wooden dummy bombs. There was an inscription on them: wood for wood and steel for steel. I contributed my share to these stories. Here are two. The first, as far as I could ascertain, was true. Thus I was but repeating it. A friend came back from Brittany and told me that in the vicinity of her château there was a large German military camp. Beside that was a camp of French prisoners. The R.A.F. came over and bombed the German camp. Next day the Germans shifted the French into their camp and they went into the other camp. At night the R.A.F. was over again and bombed the camp that had harboured the French the night before but now was full of Germans.

My second and most successful story was, as we novelists put it, entirely fictitious. It came out, as it were, when underground news was full of swollen German corpses floating back to the French shores. For in Paris it was implicitly believed the Germans had tried to invade England and had suffered a smashing defeat. I believed it, too. German depression, German bad mood and the Paris hospitals filled with wounded and hospital trains on the move day and night seemed to account for that. The papers explained at length that it was foolish to believe such rumours, and those that

still thought that England could resist were either fools or paid agents. And the papers reminded the population that spreading false news would promptly be dealt with by the Germans. So the papers encouraged the belief that Germany had suffered a flaming defeat. Now to my story.

Outside the garage of a man I knew (only in my imagination) there stopped a convoy of closed German lorries. There were fifteen lorries. The officer in charge told the garage-keeper that the garage was requisitioned for the night. The lorries were put inside the garage, and before leaving the Germans locked the garage carefully and took the key away. They'd be back in the morning. The convoy, they said, was on its way to Germany. The curiosity of the garage-keeper was aroused. He had a duplicate key and let himself into the garage. He opened the door of the first lorry. Six puffed-up German corpses lay in it. Officers of high rank they had been before the English turned them into the sea. The same kind of swollen corpses were in the other lorries. Those dead officers were being taken home for burial in Germany.

All I told this story to were deeply impressed. A clever woman friend said, though, that I should be ashamed of believing such a yarn. She was wrong. I didn't believe it. But I hasten to add that the atmosphere was such that had somebody else invented that story and had I heard it the way I used to relate it, I'm positive that I would have believed it straightway and implicitly. I was proud of my effort when a Belgian who had lived in Paris for donkey's years, said that he knew the garage-keeper. "*Le garagiste m'a raconté l'histoire lui-même*," he added.

This talking all over the shop was becoming dangerous. This I see in retrospect. At the time I didn't care. Not because I was remarkably brave but simply because the thought didn't occur to me. And it was amusing to read of the great variety of reasons the Germans were ready to shoot you for. I used to say that they should have notices up telling one for what they didn't shoot you. It would have been simpler and would have saved them paper. There began to creep into the Parisian landscape the Gestapo and their French stool-pigeons. The Gestapo had been in residence since the occupation; now they were becoming conspicuous. They were men with thick ears and close-cropped heads who wore mackintoshes and carried attaché-cases under their arms. Some of them wore riding-boots. You knew them from a mile away. And if you didn't, to paraphrase G. K. Chesterton, you asked. Therefore, conversation usually stopped whenever a German civilian appeared.

The bulk of the Gestapo reeked of police. That is an international

feature. You can smell a policeman. It's not the boots: it's that police *je ne sais quoi*. It's a trade-mark.

The men of the Gestapo whom I saw came mostly of the lower middle classes. They would have made good stationmasters in different circumstances. Paul used to say the German mind was the mind of the policeman. Thus these men took to their job as I and most of us have seen ducks taking to water. They asked more questions and pestered you with them. There was one, in July, who trotted down beside me in the rue Norvins to pant into my ear the question whether the lady I'd been talking to at the *Mère Cathérine* was English. I said her ancestors had been a few hundred years ago. But then came the Boston Tea Party and that was the end of that. Another, having listened, too, to Nona and me, followed me to *Numéro* 13 and questioned the concierge about me. Generally speaking, they didn't intrude into my life. Needless to say they didn't buy water-colours. In fact, it wouldn't have occurred to me to expect them to. But in September they were moving about a lot. The Frenchmen they employed smelt of the police, too. It was just as easy to spot them. A stranger would come into a pub and the conversation would die a natural death. The stranger would sit there for a long time. I made it a rule to stay till he was gone. After half an hour or so the stranger would go. *Sale flic* somebody or other would say. The whole thing was, as yet, crude.

My charwoman came with the tale that a friend of hers was standing that morning in the queue outside a grocery store. A car drew up, some Germans got out, the queue had to give way, the Germans entered the shop, a little later returned to their car with large parcels, and the door of the shop closed and a notice was put up, *Pas de marchandise*. The charwoman's friend said *sales Boches* and other things too. The queue, as queues have a habit of doing, lingered on. Suddenly, two plain-clothes' men came with another woman who had been in the queue. Apparently, that woman had overheard the anti-German remarks and had reported them. My charwoman's friend was taken to some German billets, where she had to clean five hundred pairs of boots, and was told next time she would go to prison. My charwoman assured me that it was true. Now, even Nona was saying that I would end up against a wall on a cold dawn. So I kept my new job from her.

This new job started at the end of August. I met a young man from the north. He was thin, very fair and felt deeply the humiliation of his country. He knew, as I did, that deliverance

could come but from England. I've rarely met devotion as bright and fine as his was. Now and then he forgot himself completely and it was for me to calm him down.

"If you don't look out you'll be shot one of these days," I often said.

"I don't care. I'd die for England."

Up in the north, especially in Lille, feeling ran high. They had experienced a previous German occupation and had no illusions about the present one. The statue of th*Fusillés* was the scene of continual demonstrations. The Germans blew the statue up. Next day some young men sang the *Marseillaise* where the statue had been. The Hun arrested them. The inhabitants of Lille thought that after the war there might easily be two statues of the *Fusillés*. Those of '14 and those of '40.

Though Jean lived in the *Zone Interdite*, he managed to come frequently to Paris. It was mostly to see me and to hear me say that England would win. He used to say, if I ever got into trouble with the Germans, he would hide me for the duration. Many English soldiers were hidden in the north and the Germans weekly reiterated that they would shoot anybody that helped English soldiers to escape. The R.A.F. visited the north regularly and dropped leaflets. On one of his visits Jean brought me some and showed them to Nona and to me in a small café. Just as Nona was reading one, two German soldiers came in and sat down at the table beside ours. We thought that riotously funny. Nona calmly finished reading it and then handed it back to Jean.

"Quite interesting," she said.

In the circumstances it definitely was.

Jean had a girl in Paris. She used to work in a munition factory. In those days she had been a Communist but now was a fervent Gaullist. I met her, and both of them said it was a pity there were but so few leaflets in Jean's possession, for if we had a larger quantity she could distribute them in her *quartier* through the good old Communist channels. She lived in a workers' district. Jean looked at me and said he had seen a typewriter in my flat. I said I'd be willing to make as many copies as I could. He gave me one of the leaflets and the girl promised to call for them in three days' time.

I sat down to my typewriter, a Royal portable, inserted paper and carbon-paper. My typewriter could produce nine copies at a time. I had plenty of paper from the dead past when I used to be an author. As I sat down and started off it came home to me with a little thrill that now, at last, I was doing something for which the Germans

would shoot me—provided they found out. I was sure they wouldn't find out.

The bell rang. That gave me a kind of shock, and I went to the door to let in the charwoman. I was annoyed. Trying to make yourself important, I said to myself. Typing it twenty times I produced one hundred and eighty copies. For one who types but with two fingers it wasn't a bad achievement. Anyhow, my back hurt. But one hundred and eighty didn't seem the right amount, so in the afternoon I forced myself to produce one hundred and eighty more. In three days there were a thousand. The girl came and took them away in her black Parisian shopping-bag. I cursed my back.

That leaflet was long and too closely printed. I've never seen yet a leaflet lying on the ground, but it seemed to me that given the fact that picking up a leaflet meant death, it should have been shorter and more easily readable, with larger type and fewer words. The French only needed a short message. The dead do.

A few forceful words that there was life on the other side of the grave and that throbbing, fighting life would bring deliverance from the tomb. In that respect the leaflet I copied fell far from the requirements. But it fell from an English plane and that in itself was a lot. That particular leaflet told the French that they shouldn't use trains too much because the R.A.F. would bomb trains that carried German troops. The French shouldn't go near German barracks because those would be bombed too. English parachutists were coming continually to France and were blowing up factories that worked for the Germans. Soon England would have the mastery of the air. It was all right, but it wasn't what the French wanted at the time.

I wasn't conceited, but three months had passed since I sallied out of my circumscribed life and I had acquired a little knowledge of local circumstances. France needed rousing; hope; a message; and the next two or three leaflets Jean brought with him were in a similar tone.

I am far from blaming the authors of those leaflets. You must have been in Occupied France to understand what people felt in the hermetically closed German coffin.

Jean's girl was rather a sweet thing. Quite unattractive but serious and devoted to the cause of her country, which was the cause of England, too, as that other Frenchwoman of the lower classes had been so many centuries ago. She came one day with a message from Jean that he couldn't come to Paris for a week. When she finished giving me the message she lingered on and said it was a shame we'd have to wait a whole week. The leaflets, she

said, were doing a lot of good. Some of them had been taken by friends to other *arrondissements*.

"You understand, *monsieur*," she said, sitting there in her cheap black dress, "that the slightest sign from England makes our hearts beat stronger." I nodded. I thought for a while, then I said to her that we must wait. She must wait. But I had an idea and told her to come back the day after to-morrow. When she was gone I sat down to my typewriter and wrote a leaflet of my own. Naturally, it was meant to be a leaflet from the other side of the grave.

Time, that heavy curtain, makes it a little difficult to reproduce *verbatim* a leaflet written in another tongue, especially as both the Seine and the Thames have done a goodish bit of flowing since I wrote it. But with due apologies for slight inaccuracies, here is the translated text:

Français—We, the English, we fight on because we haven't been betrayed and sold to the enemy as you were. Because we fight on we are going to win. The Germans hitherto have found little resistance. Therefore they conquered so much. But, because we resist and prefer death to slavery, Germany will be defeated in the long run. We know it will take time, it will entail sacrifices, but with the immense resources of our Empire which is united against the Antichrist and with our unshakeable will to conquer, Germany must lose. Our victory will be your victory. An English victory would mean the liberation of France and the restoration of French life, French glory. All we ask from you is to hinder the Germans. Sabotage, make things difficult, and then you'll see that our joint effort will chase the invader out of martyrized France.

Simple, you say. I agree. Very simple, yet in my opinion it was the right stuff at the right moment. The girl came, and I blithely explained to her that this was a leaflet somebody I knew found near the Porte Maillot. I said Porte Maillot as I could have said Métro Mercadet-Poissonnière. She read it and her eyes shone. The situation appealed to my sense of humour. Never, I thought, would a book of mine get such a reception as these simple lines got; for they weren't supposed to be mine.

She took the leaflets along. I made some more in the next weeks. They were in a similar vein but with allowances for the advance of pro-British feeling.

Jean came down, and I told him the truth. In his enthusiastic way, he was all for it. Things were going from bad to worse in the north. Up there the Germans didn't seem to trouble about creating a friendly impression. They requisitioned everything they could lay their hands on. Factories were dismantled wholesale and the

machinery was taken to Germany. But that wasn't only in the north. Systematically, in the efficient German manner, the industry of France was being strangled. The factories and plants that remained were those the Germans could use with more profit on occupied soil. Peugot, Citröen and Renault were producing tanks for the Germans, the people of Paris asked themselves why didn't the R.A.F. come to Paris and blow up those factories. It's rather a proof of German thoroughness that a certain plant that used to produce a tank a day in Daladier's time and two in Reynaud's, now was producing seven tanks a day. I had these figures from a man that was employed by the plant.

Requisitioning in Paris concentrated on sheets. The population was terribly worried. It was sheets and sheets. I saw in the shop-window of a laundry a newspaper cutting stuck to the window. The German authorities, so said the cutting, didn't requisition sheets; it was but tendentious false rumour. On some pretext or other I went into the laundry and asked why that cutting was up in the window. The fat proprietress said she hoped that would stop the Germans from coming again and taking away the sheets of her clients. They had done that twice already. I told her she was somewhat naïve.

There was trouble with the food situation, too. Personally, during my stay in Paris I hardly experienced it. But I was more or less alone and for some time was eating in restaurants where the food situation was pretty satisfactory. But the queues grew daily in size, and hunting for food had become a pressing pastime for most people around me. Butter was gone. Germany's oft-lamented lack of butter had been with us in pre-war days, together with the cardboard tank. Those stories were in the bag of tricks of those who left Germany because Hitler wouldn't give them room in his world-destroying tanks.

Curiously enough, of the tendentious stories that put a smoke-screen round Germany's real aim, the lack of butter was the only true one. From the moment they set foot in Paris the Germans chased after butter as a dog chases his tail. Having been in Germany altogether three days I know not what the standard of living was like in pre-Hitler days. I have a feeling it wasn't high. Under Hitler it was low where food was concerned. Anyway, the German didn't seem to care for good food.

There was a soldier who told me, with gastronomical tears in his eyes, that here in Paris he had eaten the best meal of his life. Since good food interests me I asked him about the meal. Well, first he

ate a very special dish. It consisted of half a hard-boiled egg and there was some yellow sauce to it, and to make the dish complete—just think!—there was a little lettuce, too. To finish the epicurean repast, he ate an omelette; there was jam in that omelette.

Whether this was the sign of scarcity of food or of no taste in food is open for speculation; for they looked comparatively well fed and didn't complain of hunger. But the German doesn't complain whilst he's on the war-path. Afterwards he squeals. However, they hadn't butter. Though the French, in June, had expected to see them eating butter astride their guns, the chase after butter was still going on. Germany must lose this war to make the world safe for butter.

They genuinely lacked fats and fats were the first things to go. Potatoes came next, oil followed. Everything to do with pork went the same way. I had it on good authority that the Armistice Treaty provided for a million pigs to be delivered to the Germans before the first of November. I mentioned that in one of my leaflets. By the middle of September the Parisians walked to their *épiceries*, only to find the laconic notice, *pas de marchandise*. A month ago it had only been *pas d'huile*, or *pas de patates*. The Press was daily hammering in that it was caused by the fiendish British blockade. Alphonse de Chateaubriant, who became lyrical when envisaging a bucolic France in German Europe, was one of the many authors whose pens were used by the Germans to make the French think that it was England that was starving them. But it wasn't difficult to convince the great majority that it was German requisitioning that caused the trouble.

"Look," I would say, "what's missing? Butter, pork, potatoes and large-sized silk stockings. That speaks for itself."

Wine was becoming scarce, too. That was on account of lack of transport. Not only had the Germans stolen much of France's rolling-stock but, with their new regulations about communications between the two zones, had cut France utterly in two. And they were getting nastier and poked their noses everywhere.

CHAPTER EIGHT

My only pleasure those early autumn days, with the sky now and then showing samples of the light grey Paris winter that would soon come, was to go to the private concerts of Victor Gilles, that fine interpreter of Chopin. It was a luminous feeling to break away from covering death as the Second Scherzo rose like a sort of winged victory; then 'La Fin de Pologne', back with a bang but confident, for Poland would rise because Chopin was saying so; or a Toccata and Fugue by Bach. I'd shake my head at the thought that there used to be Germans who didn't wear steel helmets. And then Liszt, and then back to Chopin. It was comparatively hard to go into the street where the relentless German black-out reigned.

One evening, as I walked away from Gilles's house I ran into the German count of whom I spoke before. We went into a quiet café and I asked him how the French were taking to his, and Abetz's, special brand of the Garden of Eden.

"The trouble is," the count said, "that there are three distinct policies pursued by us. First the Army. It considers France as a base of operations and doesn't care about anything else. Then the Gestapo, who want to turn France into a huge concentration camp; those people understand nothing. Then Abetz, who understands the French better than anybody else and could bring France round if only he were left alone. But Hitler always enjoys such opposing policies. He first encourages one, then the other, and you don't know where you are."

He wasn't in a good mood. He brooded a bit, then he said, "I wonder which of the three policies will come out on the top?"

"The fourth," I said, "*le manque de patates et de pinard*."

He considered my remark in his serious way and said:

"There you are. What's the good of Abetz explaining to the Frenchman the great part he will play in the New Order and then the Frenchman goes home and finds his sheets requisitioned by the Army and his son arrested by the Gestapo?"

"What's the good of it?" I repeated. "And don't forget there's England resisting. That makes an immense difference. You can't tell the French any more that the English are cowards and they only fight to the last Frenchman."

"Never mind about England. She'll be finished in no time. Of course they fight. They are Nordic people, too." Later on he said to me, "I'm glad I've met you. I want to warn you. You know

you can speak freely to me. Luckily we two can discuss anything without killing or denouncing one another. I know you're on England's side and I can quite well understand it. I don't mind, but the Gestapo is now everywhere and if you're overheard speaking as you do you'll end up in a mine in Silesia, and you'll be lucky if you end up there."

That was nice of him. 'He's quite right,' I told myself as I walked up the shilly-shallying little streets, 'they're bound to get me.' One more reason to go to England. But how? I didn't know how. And deep down in me there was a desire to stay on, too. To see it to the finish, to be there when the first English soldiers march into Paris, to see the tricolour on the Eiffel Tower, to see General de Gaulle riding up the Champs Elysées to the Arc de Triomphe which I had seen desecrated; and to see punishment meted out. By nature, I'm too lazy to be revengeful, but the *vendus* were more than even I could bear.

I went to a pub for a last drink, and there I made a compromise: once in England, to join one of the fighting forces and then perhaps to be among those who would march into Paris. This is the sort of notion you get with your last drink.

There was, for the moment, a desire in me that was somewhat nearer than revenge—to hear London on the air. I hadn't heard it since the occupation. I hadn't a radio-set, and my friends only had small sets. My desire was soon fulfilled. I was standing before the Sacré-Cœur and looking down on Paris. A daily recreation, but there, in September, I was feeling that soon I should leave. I feel such things. A dog stopped beside me and I patted him and said something or other in English to him, the language I don't only use for writing but which is one of the means of communications between dogs and myself.

"So there's an Englishman left in Paris," said a woman's voice beside me.

I looked up and recognized a Frenchwoman I used to see quite frequently but had never met before. "England is going to win the war, isn't she?" she went on. Needless to say, we became staunch friends there and then. Incidentally, she mentioned that she listened in to London every night in the house of some friends of hers who lived on the Butte, too.

"Oh, I must hear London," I said. So she promised to take me and Nona that same night, which was a Sunday, to her friends' house.

Her friends, whom I shall call Georges and Thérèse, had an

excellent radio-set. Georges was a civil servant, and both he and Thérèse were people one used to describe as well connected. Six or seven people were there to listen to London. There was a heavy curtain over the door so that neighbours and other well-meaning people shouldn't hear the radio. They were especially afraid of their concierge, for the Germans had taken over the time-worn French habit of turning concierges, barbers and such like people into informers.

"It's very easy," Georges said. "They can give them so much, or alternatively they can make things damnably unpleasant for them."

We sat round the radio and spoke in whispers.

"This," I said, "is like an anarchist meeting of fifty years ago. Plotting to throw a bomb at some royalty or other. Only the beards are missing."

"*Monsieur*," Georges said, "we carry the beards in our hearts."

There came a loud anti-climax. The Free French emission of London was jammed. We could make neither head nor tail of it. But at ten, the jamming went and a perfectly clear, perfect B.B.C. voice announced that this was the B.B.C. Home Service and that a great air battle had been fought over London, and it turned out that one hundred and eighty-six German planes were brought down. For that Sunday was 15th September.

We stayed on till curfew time and talked of France and England. Georges and his friends were completely loyal; Thérèse and the woman with the dog were hysterically attached to the cause of General de Gaulle. His modesty and sincerity, Thérèse said, were such a change for the French.

I enjoyed myself that night. Next morning I enjoyed myself much less.

It wasn't yet eight o'clock when the bell rang. I was in bed, and said to myself, let it ring. But it persisted and I rose and went and opened the door. Two men stood outside and pushed past me and came into the hall.

"Mr. de Polnay?" one of them asked. "You live here, don't you?" He spoke rather good English.

"Yes," I said, a bit surprised.

He had a slight German accent, and for a moment I wondered whether he was one of the Germans I sold water-colours to. However, he walked into the bedroom, and from the way they both looked round I guessed they were policemen. Now the light was on them. They were of the Gestapo; I had no doubts about that.

"Please show me your identity papers?"

"Who are you?" I asked.

"That has nothing to do with you." They didn't need search warrants: they needed nothing: they had the power and there was nothing further to be said about it. I gave him my passport and *carte d'identité*. They examined the papers. The one who spoke was like a fat crow. His nose was dangerously near his mouth: there was something very sad about him; a sad, fat crow. His partner was tall and burly; the traditional policeman. That type knows no frontiers. They whispered and I could see they were surprised. They fingered my passport for a long time. The cold was coming in waves through the window.

"This isn't your passport," the crow said. "Of course, it's mine," I answered in German. "You speak German?" "Why do you speak in English to me?" "Because you're English." "I'm not."

A lot of whispering followed. They turned the passport over, shook it, held it to the light and they seemed puzzled.

"But you always speak English," the crow said.

"I spent my childhood in England."

They consulted again, then the crow said they'd search the flat. It wasn't much of a search, but they turned out a locker, which was full of letters from my publishers, my agent, and friends from England. They also found some press cuttings about my books. Now there was food for questions. Why, and how, and where? And I explained that I wrote English books, but was a Hungarian. They asked what sort of English books. I said the press cuttings explained that. The unimportant one, who couldn't speak English, read out slowly the names of English papers and weeklies, and very incriminating the *Sunday Times*, the *Daily Telegraph*, and the *New Statesman and Nation* sounded.

"Do you write political books?" the crow inquired. I referred him again to the press cuttings. Then they got hold of my French cheque-book. They examined it and I had to answer many more questions, as a result of which they knew that S.C. stood for the Sporting Club of Monte Carlo and plain M. for *Maxim's*, in Nice. Leaving my papers in a disorderly heap, they continued their search and scrutinized my typewriter for a considerable period. That rather frightened me. I thought of the leaflets and didn't feel too happy about myself.

"I gather," the crow said, leaving the typewriter, "your income mainly came from England. How do you manage to get your money since we're in Paris?" "I don't." "Ah! Then what do you live on? You need money to keep this flat going and you go about quite a lot." "I sell water-colours for a painter friend of mine and we share the profits."

He was at my passport again. Later he asked where my dog was. I said my dog was dead. They whispered, and then the crow very politely, almost kindly, said they would take me down to the Hungarian Legation to find out if my passport was genuine. That, he explained, would save them from having to barge in on me on another occasion. I said that suited me. I said it in German.

"Don't bother to speak in German. English comes more natural to you."

They left me to dress and said they'd wait for me outside the house. I dressed, and it seemed to me that somebody must have denounced me for talking against them and thus I would get it in the neck. I idly wondered what they would do to me.

Nona came. She was frightened when I told her that two men of the Gestapo were waiting for me downstairs. She had seen a German military car in front of the house.

"If you don't come back," she asked, "what shall I do? To whom should I go?"

As I saw that frightened, bewildered look in her eyes, I suddenly felt as though soaring high up, while deep down beneath me was darkened Europe, that world without England, where decency and humaneness went a-begging and everything that was evil was having the time of its life. Now and then you get such a bird's-eye view. I repeated Nona's question.

"To whom should you go?" (I was still far above and still looking down.) "Go to the King of England, for if he can't send all his horses and all his men then there's nothing to help me."

I went down. They were standing outside the entrance. A small military car, with a military driver, was pulled up before the gate.

"Have you had any breakfast?" the crow asked me.

There was solicitude in his voice. I said that I hadn't, whereupon he suggested we should have a cup of coffee together, and we went to the *Choppe*. The proprietor and the customers at the counter gave us a glance and then they looked at me with a lot of pity. 'Well, they've got him,' their eyes said. The crow and the unimportant one drank coffee with plenty of milk, milk being part of the butter world. But I had a *café arrosé*, and I had it *arrosé* a second time before they finished with theirs.

The crow carried on a desultory conversation. His accent, where it wasn't German, was New York. At intervals he said *oui*, *oui*, as if answering some inner French question. Very monotonous those *ouis* were. He was interested in Nona, whom he had noticed going into the flat. Ah, an American. *Oui*, *oui*. Would Roosevelt be re-elected? I said that was quite certain. He translated my words

into German, and the unimportant one was of the opinion if Roosevelt were re-elected America would be bound to come into the war. An old workman friend of mine at the counter began to make friendly, helpful signs to me. The crow noticed that.

"Is that man your friend?" he asked. "You don't look like a man who associates with workmen."

I said I knew most of the people of the district. He glared at the workman, which was quite a feat for his placid, sad crow face. Suddenly he said, "Why didn't you go home before we entered Paris? You had plenty of time and warning. You could have gone through Spain and Portugal."

"But that isn't the way home for me. To get to Hungary I must go through Germany and Austria." You won't catch me like that, I said to myself. Because he was a German, there came the long-expected question: "What did the French think of the Germans? Did they like them?"

"It's queer," I said to him, "but since you're in Paris the Bavarian and Austrian *Gemütlichkeit* myth has been completely debunked. They are the most unpopular. First come the Rhinelanders, they are more liked than the others. But even the stiff East Prussians are preferred to the rowdy, insulting Bavarians and Austrians."

"*Oui, oui*," he said.

They were both Prussians. He translated my words to the unimportant one, who smiled broadly. Then they beamed on me in unison. Queer race, the Germans, especially if you consider I was their prisoner and they were convinced they had caught an Englishman. It was time to go. So we went and got into the car. The unimportant one sat beside the chauffeur. I unmistakably felt I was being taken for a ride. The crow turned to me. "You must have known many English people in Paris. Do you still see any?"

"Of course not. They are either interned or they got away in time."

When we got to the Carrefour Haussmann I realized that I hadn't expected them to take me to the Hungarian Legation: it was a pleasant surprise. The car stopped in the rue de Berri: we went into the Legation. The crow whispered something to an employee in the passage and the employee said he wouldn't be a minute; but he was. After a while the crow got tired of waiting and told his colleague to stay with me and with proprietory movements pushed the door of the consul's office open and went in. We waited, and while we waited a girl with dyed fair hair came out and the unimportant one, in order to cheer me up, said, "There you are. There are Hungarians who look like Nordics. So perhaps you are

a Hungarian." Then the door opened and the crow came back and said it was all right and handed me back my passport. "Am I free?" I asked. He said that was so.

When we came out the driver said to the crow: "Do we go out again this morning?"

"Yes, but not till later."

That meant, I suppose, that some unfortunate person got a few hours' respite. I got quite cheeky and said that he should send me back in his car because I had wasted enough time coming down with them for no reason whatsoever.

"We must be careful with petrol," the crow said. "The control is very strict."

Nevertheless, he told the driver to take me back home.

"I'm sorry, de Polnay, that we frightened you," he said as I got in. "Frightened? Good gracious me, I wasn't frightened." As I was closing the door he poked his sad head in. "You got off all right, but take my advice and get out of Paris." "Why?" I asked, trying to look innocent and wide-eyed. "Look here, if your English friends took, let's say Belgium, and found a Swede in Brussels who'd spent most of his life in Germany and wrote German books, would they be glad to have him round the place?" "I don't know what you're driving at." "You know. Well, good-bye for the present. *Oui, oui.*"

I wished he hadn't said for the present. I found Nona with Harry at the *Mère Cathérine*. When I related our final little talk, Nona said that apparently I would have to leave France and that would mean that our roads would part. Harry said it was foolish to get frightened. The Germans were checking up on foreigners, and that was all. Then I told them that when the crow returned my passport he made a note with a pencil on a typewritten sheet. It was in German and I could make out only one line, which said I was usually at the *Mère Cathérine* and walked about with a grey setter. I thought it was preposterous to have mistaken my poor friend for a setter.

"An anonymous denunciation," Harry said. "Was it Paul?"

"I doubt it," I said. "It's too obvious and Paul knew Dodo wasn't a setter."

I must say it was somewhat a nasty feeling that somebody had denounced me, and anonymously, too. I must, I decided, go carefully. Nothing is easier than to make a decision.

When I questioned the concierge on my return home, I found that while that pair was waiting for me to dress, the crow had

asked her if many people visited me, and who they were: were there any English-speaking people among them? Nona had explained to her that I might get into trouble because I got my money from England, and it was natural for me at times to speak of England. That, the concierge declared, was natural enough. "I feel," I explained to Nona, "like a rabbit a bad shot has missed. But if the rabbit continues to hang about, the law of probability will help the bad shot get it."

In the evening I went to Thérèse and Georges's and listened to London. The Free French programme came through clearly and somebody spoke who had managed to get out of France and reach England. So there was a way out.

"You must go," Thérèse said. I asked how. A friend of theirs was coming back from Marseilles in a couple of days and he would surely know the ropes.

Next day Jean's girl came for new leaflets and I waited for her outside the house and told her that in future she shouldn't come up because the Germans might be watching the house. She knew a little bar not very far from the Butte. The pub-keeper was decidedly pro-English, and we could meet there. So I thought I was being very careful and soon forgot about the Gestapo.

Thérèse's friend arrived from Marseilles. He painted a rosy picture of life in Marseilles. Provided you knew your way about you could buy false passports to see you to Portugal, or get stowed away on ships going to Casablanca, and when at Gibraltar the English stopped the ship, all you had to do was to come on deck and say there you were. It sounded too good to be true. But he spent one whole evening explaining to me how easy it was, and there was London on the air and both Thérèse and the woman with the dog saying I must go. Go; understand? I must go.

"And," Thérèse said, "think if you get to England you could fight against the Boche. God, how I envy you."

The first question, I said, was how to get over to Unoccupied France. Oh, that was easy, too. The Germans signed permits without much ado, and she knew somebody in a government office who had to do with those passes and she'd see him next day. Yes, I said, but I hadn't the money to career round Unoccupied France. They said I didn't need money, and anyway, anything was better than remaining with the Germans. I walked away with the man from Marseilles. We talked of all sorts of things, and I mentioned to him that lone battery I'd seen firing from Madeleine's window. He said he was one of the gunners: that made us friends.

"When we were retreating towards the Loire," he said, "I saw a little Parisian boy in the village where we were going to spend the night. He was a sorry sight. I spoke to him. He had been taken along by neighbours and in the great exodus he lost them and was wandering around without food and without the slightest idea of where he was. His father was at the Front, his mother was dead. I offered him food. When we got to our battery one of the gunners gave a shout and rushed up to the little boy: it was his father. Father and son were a happy couple that night, you can believe it. Isn't it an extraordinary story? I'm telling you this because you're a writer and might some day make a story of it."

"I couldn't," I said. "Nobody would believe it."

It was a little after midnight: the curfew hour. The Germans had extended the curfew by an hour. *Timeo Danaos* was first applied long ago. It holds good with the Germans to day, and we in Paris wondered what concessions Vichy must have made for that regal present. To elude the curfew was a seasoned sport. Many times I was in the streets five or ten minutes after the curfew. Nobody cared very much about it as long as you weren't on the main thoroughfare. But even if you were, it was the practice of the Germans to pass you without stopping you, and then call a French policeman to speed you on your way; or, if it was very late, to make you spend the night at a police-station. Now it was five after midnight, and neither the gunner of yore nor I took much notice of it. We were in the rue des Martyrs, very much a by-water. A German patrol came noisily down the street. The N.C.O. in charge flashed his torch at us and said in bad French, it was noisy though, that we should get off the street immediately or he would arrest us. I answered him in German, which generally disarmed them, and said in a jocular tone that we were on our way home after a last drink. He said gruffly that that was no excuse and that we must both hurry home. Actually he remained standing till we reached the stairs.

"You see," my friend said, "they're closing in. You must go."

"Oh, I'll go."

Thérèse informed me next night that the Germans were no longer giving permits to go across into unoccupied zone. Now you could only get them after a long delay, and only if it was an urgent family matter, or on business that interested them. Otherwise the demarcation line was strictly enforced and all exits hermetically sealed. "But don't worry," she said, "you can cross easily in a clandestine manner. Thousands and thousands are doing it. I know

somebody that lives near the line. When you're ready to go we'll give you a letter to him and he'll see you across."

"I wouldn't advise you to go to him," Georges said. "He travels about a lot and perhaps you wouldn't find him when you got there and would have to wait. The best thing is to go to Moulins and try and get hold of some day-pass and walk across the bridge. If that's impossible, then swim the Allier."

"I wouldn't advise Moulins," somebody else said. "The bridge is carefully guarded. Poitiers would be better." A fourth said that Châlons-sur-Saône would meet the case. We roamed round the whole demarcation line and the radio spoke of the sinking of the *City of Bengal*, another dastardly German crime.

"Just think, you'll be in England," the woman with the dog said, "with the English and far from the Germans. Perhaps you'll broadcast to France one night and we'll be sitting here and listening to you."

"You must go," Thérèse said.

Next day she was going to see another official and find out what the situation was at the demarcation line. He would know.

They knew all that was going on in Paris, as befits well-informed people. The Germans had brought Thorez back to Paris; Doriot was coming up from unoccupied zone. Boosting the P.P.F. and the Communists simultaneously was the kind of game the Germans liked. That the Communists were on the move I'd seen for myself. On the walls in the mornings you beheld chalked messages of theirs. *Pain et travail, Thorez au Pouvoir.* But other inscriptions were on the walls, too. Near the *Moulin de la Galette* I saw chalked on a wall, *Avec de Gaulle à la victoire*: and it stayed on the wall for three or four days. I even saw *Vive l'Angleterre* on a wall of the outer Boulevard.

Was it my personal rising temper or was it France throwing off almost too quickly its lethargy? I don't know. I suppose it was both. Anyway, the end of September and the beginning of October were like a revolution, like a victorious battle. Any moment the sky would open and the English and the Free French would descend and liberate us. That feeling was over the town. The Germans went to great lengths to describe the havoc they made in England. It seemed that London was in complete ruins. We believed that. Yet out of those ruins deliverance would come. For me who all my life had believed that the spiritual values stand far above cheeses and bank balances, it was an intoxicating sight to see that pure flame leaping out of the ashes of a dead world of hoarders.

During the entire occupation, I went but once to a cinema, and that was at the beginning of October. The newsreel featured German bombers flying off to bomb England out of existence. Whistling and cat-calls were the audience's reactions. Very edifying it was and Nona went to a cinema on the Champs Elysées a few days later with her mother, and there was booing too. The cinemas put up the notice that their dear clients should abstain from demonstrations during the showing of the newsreels. The papers gave ponderous lessons how one should behave in the cinema. One got itself thoroughly going and reminded the Parisians that the Germans were their guests, and kinder and better behaved guests you could hardly wish for. The French should show that old-world French hospitality hadn't died. The paper and the Germans, too, got their answer.

It happened not far from the Butte at the Gaumont Palace. The newsreel was showing British troops evacuating some concession or other in China, and the synchronized accompaniment played '*Tipperary*' to convey that Tipperary or any other place was, nowadays, a pretty long way to go for the English. The cinema rose, and the whole audience sang '*Tipperary*.' Pity I wasn't there. Anyway, the German guests lost their temper, and the following day the papers brought the order that if any further demonstrations took place all the cinemas in Paris would be closed.

It had become the habit of German-controlled papers to declare in stern words that if such and such happened the whole world and his wife would be shot, and in the same breath to go in for a little sob stuff and make things look as if mother Germany were doing it for France's own benefit and prosperity. Rather sick-making, but typical of the schizophrenic German mentality. Now the papers depicted the tragedy that would befall the cinema industry if further booing took place, and the Germans were compelled to close every cinema. Fathers of seven would go hungry and the seven brats would go hungry too. In short, it was your patriotic and humane duty to look in silence at the newsreels and the Germans had issued the order for the only reason that the fathers of seven should not lose their and their mites' daily loaf. Positively reminiscent of a German soldier who, with tears in his eyes, spoke of a Belgian refugee child he picked up on the road near Liège, and in the same sentence described an evening in a Polish village where he and his comrades, the entire lot of them, first raped a Polish girl, then shot what was left of her.

Into that Paris in turmoil the news of Dakar came without a ripple. The days of Mers-el-Kebir were over. It was bitterly regretted that Dakar had failed, but there was no talk of English guns killing Frenchmen. If killing Frenchmen could have secured Dakar, then Paris was ready to see many Frenchmen killed.

I make no secret of the admiration I have for German propaganda methods. They're a devastating new weapon; they're superior to anything I've seen so far; and they were more than effective and played a major part in the conquest of France. But once established on the spot German nature will out and counterbalances the successful propaganda. And they are slow to appreciate changing moods.

A poster appeared in the streets and in the *Métro* stations. A bearded, drowning sailor was seen floating among wreckage, holding high the tricolour; the horizon was dark and red with firing battleships: letters dipped in blood beseeched the French not to forget Oran. Thousands of those posters covered the walls of the town. Practically every poster bore some addition the wits of Paris had written on it. Generally a swastika was drawn into the tricolour. On other posters the letters 'l' and 'e' were written into the word Oran and an 's' added: hence it read Orléans. In a *Métro* station somebody, whose memory wasn't short, crossed out Oran and wrote the word Lusitania above it. Now the poster read, *'N'oubliez pas Lusitania!'*

Henri, the Royalist, said to me that now, at last, I was having an insight into the real France. As he knew I intended to go, he added that he was glad that I could take with me such stirring memories. I said I was gladder than he, for the first two months had been an ordeal, a deception.

"And don't forget," he said, "that we royalists never wavered. Our France is a thousand years old. Slightly older than the Radical Party. I'm not speaking of the Daudet-Maurras crowd: they're political royalists. But we who with Bainville believe that the fundamental French idea is based on the crown of Saint Louis, François I and Henri IV, we've shown that we remained loyal to France and to England. Look at those worshippers of the *Front Populaire*!" I didn't have to look: the voices of Michel and Robert dominated the pub. Robert was especially excited. He wanted France to declare war on England. Dakar was the last straw. Our groups, though at the same counter, were noticeably divided. Robert almost ignored me; but that wasn't only a matter of conviction. It was fear, too. Since he'd heard that the Gestapo had visited me, he kept away from me. His eyes, whenever they glanced at me, plainly registered that I would be shot soon and thank

God he was loyal to the Germans, so no trouble would come his way for having associated himself with me. They were talking of oil, soap, and tinned sardines and other black market matters. Just to annoy them, I told the latest news of the Battle of Britain to the *serveuse*. That was too much for Michel. He came over and said:

"Have you any friends and relations in England?"

"Yes, my brother and most of my friends."

"They didn't choose well," Michel laughed. "It must be very hot for them."

"Michel," I said, "I hope I shall see you swinging on one of the trees of the Place du Tertre."

"There aren't enough trees for the lot of you," Henri said.

"He'll be shot," Robert said. "He'll be shot. I warned him."

When they returned to their oil and soap Henri said to me: "You see, our middle classes. They killed France. You remember what Bainville said? The Republic in sixty years destroyed what the kings made in a thousand years."

CHAPTER NINE

THÉRÈSE had written to one of her many friends near the demarcation line to arrange to see me across the line: I had only to let him know when I was coming, he had replied.

"It's utterly foolish for me to start off without any real money," I said.

"It's better to eat in a soup kitchen in Unoccupied France than to wait till the Germans catch you." That seemed reasonable enough. "And if I stand in a queue outside a soup kitchen the *gendarmes* will arrest me as an undesirable alien with no means of existence." "You're a terrible man," both women said; "you still think that one can only travel in a *wagon-lit* with everything booked in advance." But Thérèse had heard of an organization that sent men to the English and to General de Gaulle. It was a marvellous organization and saw you across the demarcation line, got you on board ship somewhere in a Mediterranean port and before you recovered from surprise you were safe at Gibraltar. She was going to look into the matter, and that seemed to her the best solution.

"I could murder that woman," Nona said.

Those evenings in Thérèse's house were either spent in working out plans to get me across the border, or in endless discussions about the war. We were in fact what the French call strategists of the *Café du Commerce*. Georges, who had been through the spring campaign, was of the opinion that even the very best morale could not have resisted the Panzers. That was contrary to public opinion. The legend had grown up that France had been defeated only because of the traitors and the *vendus*: had it been but a clash of arms the victory would have belonged to France.

"That," said Georges, "is a fallacy. We'd have been defeated whatever we did."

"To tell you the truth," I said, "there's a lot to be said for your opinion. But I for one would encourage the legend. Let the French people believe that they lost because they were betrayed. That's better for the resurrection of French morale. In the long run they aren't very mistaken. They were betrayed, but much earlier than they think."

Georges Bonnet, the French Foreign Minister at the time of the declaration of war, was getting a fine boost in the Paris papers. He had tried to avert the war, he was in touch with Ciano till the last moment and it was that fiend of fiends, Winston Churchill (to quote the paper: *déjà, ou plutôt, encore*), who had upset his plans for a new Munich. Since Georges was a civil servant of high standing and was continuously in touch with people who came and went between Paris and Vichy, he could explain the reasons the Paris papers had taken Bonnet off the rack.

The Germans were displeased with Vichy. There was no Fascist revolution, the old marshal was surrounded by men of the late republic, and the long and short of it was that a pitiful little clique of nonentities was calling itself the French Government. Moreover, the confusion of ideas didn't belong only to the Parisian prostitute I mentioned before; the gentlemen of Vichy didn't realize either they were the rulers of a beaten people. Faction politicians at heart most of them, they instituted a small world to spite, as it were, their political enemies of the night before, as though nothing had changed apart from their coming to power. Here again one beheld the lamentable story: Hitler and entire Germany had embarked on this war but to defeat the political opponents of the little men of Vichy.

"They give you the impression," Georges said, "that their only regret is that the *Chambre* no longer exists, so they can't tell Chautemps and Boncourt and the rest of them, 'Look! now it's our turn to run France.' "

Into that row of empty bottles of Vichy water walked M. Bonnet asking for a portfolio, reminding the *maréchal* that it was he who unearthed him and sent him to Spain. The gratitude of a *maréchal* isn't superior to other men's gratitude: M. Bonnet left empty-handed. The Germans, who were on the alert and never quite managed to understand the inner values of French political lobbying, got hold of Bonnet as a card to play against Vichy. Hence the limelight in their papers.

"The Germans," Georges continued, "know they need Pétain. Without him there would be chaos. They treat him as a kind of Hindenburg. Of course they made sure from the start that he has no Papen and no Hitler up his sleeve. They also know the advantages they can derive from the symbol of victorious France playing the game of the Boche. But they want to play their usual game of double crossing. They, however, don't understand the inner workings of our public life. They're convinced Laval is popular: nobody is more despised than he."

The Germans played their game with Vichy in the traditional cat-and-mouse style. They never gave direct advice, or said that so-and-so should join the cabinet. The Abetz cat was a subtle cat. An emissary of the Germans, naturally a Frenchman, would go to Vichy and say that such-and-such a person was considered by the Germans as most unsuitable for the job he held. That pronouncement would be followed by one of the countless reshuffles of the Vichy cabinet. The emissary would return to Vichy in a few weeks and with a lot of heeing and hawing would disclose the displeasure of his masters with the new ministers. There would be a reshuffle and when, driven to despair, Vichy asked the Germans to give them the names of the men they wanted to see in office the reply would be—Oh, no, Germany didn't want to meddle with the internal affairs of Unoccupied France: nothing of the sort. Of course, it would be quite different if the government decided to move to Paris. . . . By the way, henceforward no more letters could be sent from one zone to the other. If Paris didn't suit them, what about Versailles? And there was another minister who should be sacked, and goods traffic would cease between the two zones.

"Believe me," Georges concluded, "those men of Vichy are putting up a great fight in refusing to come into Occupied France. Probably they're doing it because they are afraid to lose the little power that's left to them."

Thérèse, who had been running all over the shop, came back with the news that the de Gaulle organization didn't exist. But there was

the man who had answered her letter. I must go—and to Marseilles. From Marseilles it would be easy.

I was already half ready to go. Only money and the final push was needed. I was quite resolved not to embark on the adventure without sufficient money. I found out that my neutral nationality was no guarantee of getting out of France in the normal way. In Occupied France you had to stay put, and in Unoccupied France the neutrals only got exit visas to return to their own countries. Too many neutrals had left France for England; now the Germans were stopping it. If it had to be an adventure I wasn't the one to shrink from it. The yellow old women would see to that.

But there was Nona. The whole thing was damnably difficult, especially as I knew that my loyalties would get the better of any other consideration. What to do and how to do it were questions that revolved like a wheel. I looked out through the window at the greying autumn wall and the wheel went round and round. The canaries had become silent: the wheel persisted.

Then the bell rang. It was three in the afternoon. Since the visit of the Gestapo I objected to the bell; but I went to the door and opened it. There stood Jean's girl. She wore her cheap black dress and she must have shrunk, because both she and the dress were but a small speck with the yellowness of the staircase as a protruding background.

"I told you not to come to the flat," I said. "It's foolish. I told you they may be watching me." She didn't answer, but walked in. "Nobody here?" she asked. "No," I said. "What is it?" She looked like a lot of bad tidings. "They got him," she said. "Who?" I asked furiously. Furious, for she hadn't told me what I immediately guessed. "Jean. Monsieur, they caught Jean with those leaflets. They caught him in Lille." "Are you sure? How do you know it?"

One of their mutual friends, a Lillois, too, had come from Lille—Jean had been arrested several days ago. Apparently, the Germans had watched him. There were too many leaflets about and Jean was travelling too much into occupied zone: or, maybe, some friend had given him away. He talked too much and trusted too many people.

"They'll shoot him," the girl said. "He must be helped. But how?" I gazed at her unattractive, unhappy face and felt like advising her, too, to go to the King of England. "Is that all you know?" I asked. Probably he was already dead. Yes, that was all. She thought it was plenty. "It's terrible," I said, "to be so powerless. Was he caught red-handed?" "You know he always carried leaflets on him."

I nodded. His pockets had been full of them. Those dropped by the R.A.F., mine, and any others he could pick up. I'd no doubt that when the Germans arrested him they found the entire collection on him. The girl was now crying. She wept with her arms folded, sitting up straight, as though detached from her tears. That utter despair, that complete hopelessness was most terrible.

"My poor child," I said. "Those Boches. God! Those Boches." She stopped crying. "They'll pay for it. They'll pay for it. What did he do? He only did his duty as a Frenchman. If everybody had done his duty as he did . . ." "Then the Germans wouldn't be here."

She stayed on for quite a while. We weren't living in times of wreaths and red roses. We both knew he'd be shot, or was already dead, and we could do less than nothing about it. Then she went and I walked down with her, and at the stairs on the edge of the square we decided to meet again in her friend's pub the day after to-morrow. She would try to find out more.

Looking down into the rue Gabrielle, so narrow, and so full of cobbles that glistened because there had been a little rain, with a mournful *bec de gaz* that had grown out of the cobbles, I asked her if she was angry with me for having helped and encouraged Jean in his work.

"Angry? But you were doing your duty, too."

So we parted, and I watched her till she reached the *bec de gaz*, which now was positively drooping.

I walked round to *Joe's* and read the evening paper. All those who hid British subjects, soldiers, or otherwise, would be shot: all those who helped them in any way would be shot too. The German authorities, the paper explained, didn't consider as *Anglais* only British subjects but everybody that in any sense sided with the English. At last, I thought, I was getting an official status.

But it was far from pleasant to have somebody you liked, whom you worked with for the same cause, go like that out of the world and your own life. I had no illusions and knew that enthusiastic French boy with all that flame and passion would be dead by now. It hurt; and I said how sad it was to die like that without having seen the liberation of France. Out of a book of my childhood there came to me a picture of two French soldiers standing on the ramparts of a fortress, one leaning against the other, with blood trickling from his tunic. The other, as befits books for children, looks into the gloaming with a serious look. The caption read, 'Open your eyes, *mon enfant. C'est la France qui arrive.*' Nobody

would say that to Jean. I was glad he wouldn't believe that I wasn't English. In a way it must have cheered his last hours to think that he had been working together with an Englishman, and I knew that like many others he had added admiration for the English, that one of them managed to walk about Paris without being caught by the Boche.

I tried to make my spirits rise by saying that the way things were it was normal to lose a friend and collaborator like that. I might easily be the next. I wondered if I was afraid. I wasn't. I'd completely assimilated the mood and temper that was rising around me; and I had a start of nearly three months.

"If only my friend, the banker, were here," I said that evening to Nona as we went to Thérèse, "I could get away. He would surely lend me the money. You'd come with me, wouldn't you?" She didn't answer.

Admiral Muselier spoke on the radio. He answered Darlan. It was a fighting speech and excellently delivered. The woman with the dog wept. My charwoman next day said she wept, too.

"By '42 the war will be over," Thérèse said. "You'll come to Paris immediately after the war and we'll watch the *vendus* being hanged."

"The war won't be over in '42," said Georges.

He had had much to do with production in the first phase of the war and gave us rather a pessimistic picture of the next years to come.

"Then how will the Germans be beaten?" his wife impatiently asked.

"*Manque d'air*," he said. "They can't fill their lungs. They can conquer as much as they want, and more. But the air will always be missing. Not only because England has the control of the oceans, but because nothing opens up for them and everything closes as they approach and finally suffocates them." That was a bit like the saying of a Turkish general in the last war to Liman von Sanders, who was enumerating the German victories. "*Ihr werdet euch zu Tode siegen.*"

"When the Germans entered Paris," I said, "Robert and I used to say that after the war we'll open a school of strategy. I spent hours and hours pumping Germans for information about their new warfare. I reached the conclusion they won and made their army almost invincible by having found the perfect co-ordination between planes and Panzers. The Barbarians defeated the Roman javelin-throwing infantry because they found perfect co-ordination between the

fighting soldier and the horse. This now was the same thing. But the Germans have brought two other deadly weapons into this war, Fifth Column and propaganda.

"I spent many sleepless nights last summer straining every particle of brains I possess to find the proper road for England's victory. It seems to me that the Fifth Column could be turned into the most effective boomerang of all times. England has at her disposal a much larger Fifth Column than Germany ever had. In Poland, in Norway, the whole way down to the Pyrences, millions and millions will come to hate the Germans more and more. Rhapsodic sabotage and killing a German here and cutting a telephone wire there won't help. But to organize the Fifth Column into a continuously striking force would be a great step to victory. Think of the advantage of your troops, without having to land on the Continent, operating behind the enemy lines with the population helping them and the enemy unable to distinguish your troops from the rest. It can be done. Systematically, with military precision." "It's a sound idea," Georges said. "And propaganda working hand in hand with it."

Next day the Germans arrested a Frenchman I vaguely knew. He disappeared and nobody ever found out what became of him. I used to see his wife now and then and she was like that drooping *bec de gaz* in the rue Gabrielle.

Punctually I turned up in the pub where Jean's girl was to meet me. She wasn't there. I waited. We were supposed to meet at three. Four o'clock came. I went out into the street and waited there. Many people passed by. A few German soldiers, then again a dark lot of civilians. I went back to the bar. At six o'clock I told the proprietor I'd come back the next day. I became a bit like those German soldiers who had waited for their vanished sergeant. I went back every day but never saw her again. I don't know why she never turned up: I'm only stating a fact.

Every day I hoped to see her and to find out what exactly happened to Jean; as if she knew any more than I. And where was she? To disappear like that had become part and parcel of life within Germany's new order. In that little pub I ran into an old friend whom I hadn't seen since the occupation. He lived in a distant, strange country; he lived on the other side of the river. He was a White Russian, a moderate artist, and because last time we met it was still France and our lives had been our wonted lives, we were somewhat moved as we shook hands. He was going down town and I walked with him. The Russians were well treated by the Germans. They got jobs and were invited to Germany, where better jobs

awaited them. The Germans must have whispered into their ears that once England was defeated they would liberate Russia from Bolshevism. They would put a Tsar on the throne and the *émigrés* would get their property back. They fawned over the Russians. Serge Lifar was the cynosure of German eyes; the apple, too.

"But," my friend said, "I hate them. And I don't want a Russia run by the Germans. Let it be red or green as long as it remains Russia." He was certain of the ultimate defeat of Germany. But *pauvre Londres*, how they were destroying that city! Because we knew London well we quickly walked over the streets that stood out in our memories and wondered if they were still there.

"With all the bombs in the world dropping on them they're happier than we are here," my friend said. "Living in this city is worse than anything else; and much worse will follow. And after the war?"

We crossed the Place de la Trinité. A policeman stopped the traffic to let two German lorries roll by. After the war? In a little street where Montmartre dropped completely away lived an old woman who had seen the *Commune* with its barricades and pools of blood. I spoke to her. It was but a few days before. She had a moustache, and wiry hairs like pikes stood out from her chin, no teeth, and her mouth was a dark, empty hole as she said to me that the bloodshed of the *Commune* was nothing, nothing even in memory, compared to what would follow when the Germans were swept out. All who helped them to come, to feel at home, to possess France more thoroughly, would die; an ugly death would be their lot. Those pikes trembled and the mouth looked shadowy and hollow as she said that. Never again would France be betrayed. There was a cat in her room; but it hadn't such a fine moustache.

We were near the Opera. It's a fine building—from behind.

"We who were brought up with footmen and grooms around us," my friend was saying, "had already to readjust ourselves after the last war. You know how hard it was. What about it now? The world after this war will be a world I can hardly imagine."

"I don't care," I said. "As long as to-morrow belongs to England I'm quite happy to look forward to it. Let France be free again and there will be real understanding between these, the outstanding product of civilization, and then everything must turn out comparatively well. Have you noticed how the French are missing the English? *Les sales Anglais*. How many times we heard Frenchmen say as they looked round the Champs Élysées or *chez Joseph* that they weren't any more at home in their own town because of the English? And now? Now they would give anything to see them

again. They don't feel at home on the Champs Elysées because there are no more Bank Holiday trippers about, and because no ugly parchment-faced English spinster asks for *rosbiff* and chips from the aghast Joseph they don't enjoy their *escargots*. To me, now, it looks like a married couple that had fought and quarrelled and had mistrusted each other, had parted, and poor *Marianne* finds herself lost, alone, without her partner. She'd give anything in the world to have him back, and let's hope when they're united again she wouldn't make the same mistakes a second time."

"Nor her partner," my friend said.

We were going through the street in which my friend the banker's bank was. That bank had often been attacked by the Germans in the papers. Part of the capital was English and the bank had stood for the *liberalistische Schweinewirtschaft* of which Germany was making an end. We were in front of the house. The name of the bank had been removed from the door. I looked through the entrance and there I saw the bank porter sitting at his desk. There was something frightfully reminiscent of the past in the black jacket and white tie of the porter. So much so that I said to the Russian, "Wait a minute, I'll go in and perhaps he will know where the banker is. He's probably in England."

The porter recognized me. I asked where his boss was. The idle question of an idle afternoon.

"He just went out," the porter said.

"What? He's in Paris?"

"Yes, sir, he came back a week ago. He'll be in in the morning." I said I'd come and see him. The porter wrote on a slip of paper that Mr. de Polnay would see him at ten. I think I must have had wings as I rejoined my friend.

"He'll give me the money to get out," I said. "Who knows, in a week's time I'm in Marseilles, and before the end of the year in England." A convoy of German lorries full of sightseeing soldiers rattled by. "Think; in England!" Because my friend was a Russian and an artist to boot, he said, "You see, your poor Dodo died that she shouldn't be in the way." I nodded. So we talked of Dodo, and as we talked I could clearly see her before me and, because she'd been a vain little person and had enjoyed flattery, I felt her tail was wagging with appreciation. I was going, it was thanks to her that I was going, so she hadn't really made a mess of that dying business, and it was nice that I appreciated it.

Nona had news for me when I came back. A friend of hers, an Englishwoman, had come to Paris from Marseilles. She was a

woman with a large income, and because boredom was part of her large income she had bought some years ago one of the most fashionable bars in Paris in order to kill time in a more interesting manner. That she made a good deal of money out of her hobby only shows that those that have many pounds don't despise the pence as we poundless ones do; hence they possess them both. She had left Paris during the great exodus and her bar had been reopened by her Italian barman and the bar was making a nice bit out of our dear German guests. The Italian put the money into his own pocket. That was too much for her, and oblivious of the risks her nationality entailed, she came back from Marseilles to turn the Italian out and to make the marks flow into her own pocket. Rather an exciting study for the historian of our *tempora et mores*.

Nona had seen her and it appeared that Marseilles was effectively the gateway to England. Her own son had succeeded in making good his escape through Marseilles. She knew there people who knew the ropes and Nona had arranged for me to meet her, and she would give me the names and addresses. Actually she would put me in touch with an Englishman who could help me down there. It was decent of Nona to tell me all that considering her utter dislike for the idea of my leaving Paris.

To make everything seem even brighter, Thérèse that evening said she might arrange for me to go to the unoccupied zone with an official pass. I'm afraid I must be very vague about the methods she was going to use. Within a few days she could give me a final answer. As I listened that night to London I felt it very near. The little that was left of it, for the B.B.C. didn't help to dispel our notion that London was going, going, gone.

I was up next morning with the conservative lark, and frisking with hope, went down to Paris to see the banker. I waited, the same as in the past, in the board-room. First, the long green table and heavy chairs, with heavier curtains keeping reality out, struck me as incongruous, something that had risen out of a dead past to laugh or be laughed at. On the walls the portraits of some of the dead bankers; heavy gold frames to commemorate their heavy money-making. I quite forgot the Montmartre *Maler*, and I sat down almost wondering whether I had jumped back into the years before yesterday. In the next room somebody was 'phoning. He spoke about some Indo-Chinese bonds, and how many thousands would there be sold or bought, and that was too much; I got up and pulled the curtains aside and looked into the street. Two Germans in the brown uniform of the *Arbeitsdienst* were marching along. No, it wasn't a dream. But even they couldn't shake off my surround-

ings. In fact, I shouldn't have been surprised had the door opened and His Pantomime Majesty, Napoleon III, walked in with the eager Zola hidden in some alcove and writing his *Argent*.

The door opened and the banker came in.

"You here?" he said.

"What about you being here?" I said. So we both indulged in the aftermath of surprise and he took me to his room.

"You remember," I ruefully said, "how we planned the peace treaty in this room?"

"It's more essential now than ever," he said.

"Well, let's write it if we both get to England," I said.

Then we talked. He had been in the unoccupied zone since the capitulation. He had come back to Paris to see how things were with the bank, and would return to the unoccupied zone in a fortnight. The bank, as such, hardly existed any more and we spoke of the constant attacks against it in the papers, and he said the Germans had tried all their charms on him to induce him to work with them, for with all their *Weltanschauung* and *Blut und Boden* they were only too ready to welcome any old plutocrat into the fold. Some of his friends, and even a member of his family, had gone over to them. "Our moneyed classes deserve to be stripped of every *sou* they have," said the man of money. Then he asked after Nona and Dodo, and I told him the summer I had had. He was aghast.

"But why don't you go?" he asked.

"Money," I said. It sounded faint. The telephone conversation was still going on.

"How much do you need?" I mentioned a sum that for the *Maler* was more than the proceeds of hundreds and hundreds of water-colours. I was well-nigh giddy, yet proud of my daring as I named the sum. "Don't be childish," he said. "That's much too little."

Then he named a sum. Not so many years ago I lost five times as much at one sitting in Cannes, but now it was a king's ransom. "I'll let you have it to-morrow," he said, and asked us to lunch with him afterwards. I wanted to have his opinion of my plans, so he said that quite a few people had managed to get away from Unoccupied France. He didn't know how, but in Marseilles I was bound to find out. He didn't advise me to go and stay in Marseilles; the police were too inquisitive. I should stay somewhere in Provence and go into Marseilles and have a look round. Only beware of *agents provocateurs*. That very morning the papers reported that a yacht was caught off Cannes with sixty or so people trying to make a getaway. I said I didn't fear *agents provocateurs*. My pub talks had

given me the necessary routine to recognize them and keep away from them.

"My final advice is," he said, "that you should go. Here, if the Germans get you you're in for it. If they put you in prison in the unoccupied zone, well you know us, you can always talk yourself out, especially if you have money."

Before I left I remembered that my pocket contained but a few francs, and I needed a good luncheon to tell Nona that now I was as good as gone. So I . . . said er . . . don't you know . . . what ho . . . what about a little advance on the money he was going to lend me. Braced by the telephone next door that had just swallowed an additional five millions, I hoped he'd make it two hundred francs. He gave me a thousand francs, and as I raced down the stairs I thanked Mammon for bankers and even for Indo-Chinese bonds.

Nona was waiting for me in a bar on the Place Pigale, and when I told her of the fortune that would fall into our hands next day and showed her the thousand francs as a token thereof, she said, "Please let me faint." We had an excellent meal and then with beautiful cold langouste before me and roast duck and *haricots verts sautés* to cheer me on to an excellent Camembert and Beaujolais galore, I said I was going.

"I'm coming with you," she said—she spoke with that soft Californian accent of hers and the words seemed to be coming from her eyes—"It's a ridiculous wild-goose chase. It'll be the end of both of us. But I'm coming because I want to be with you a little longer. But in the end I'll be forced to leave you and go back to America." I said, no, never; and then I asked her, as though she were the oracle of all the lost great days:

"And I?"

"You? You'll get to England because you want it more than anything on earth."

In the afternoon I met the proprietress of the fashionable bar. She was so full of the crimes of the Italian that she hadn't much time for other matters. Yes, Marseilles was the place to go to,—he had sold all her old brandy—here was the name of the Englishman who would help me,—at least eight thousand francs' worth of champagne was missing—everybody who wanted to, got to England, —she went herself to the *Kommandantur* and denounced him—the town was full of people who hid you on boats,—she cunningly told the Germans that the Italian said the brandy and the champagne had been requisitioned by them—with money you could buy

false passports,—the Germans were very civil. I drew a deep breath.

"You shouldn't have come here," I said.

"I won't let him get away with it," she said.

It was she who didn't get away with it or without it. The Germans interned her in November with all the other English women.

CHAPTER TEN

NEXT morning Nona and I went to the banker. He gave me the money. I asked him if he wanted a receipt. "No," he said, "if we both get out I'll come to see you in London; if any of us fails on the way then this receipt won't have any value." Then we went and had luncheon. It was the most expensive of restaurants, but because he wasn't only a banker, but a Frenchman too, the food was all food should be. No Germans; a woman wearing the American Field Ambulance uniform was at the next table. Though it was a meatless day there was more meat than we wanted. The restaurant was nothing if not a continuation of that board-room. A boy in the street was selling the midday papers. Had I bought one it would surely have contained a picture of Admiral Darlan arriving at 10 Downing Street and a London policeman saluting him.

As we sat there with only the ghosts of *gigots* and *châteaubriants* moving round us, the banker spoke of his gardener on his estate outside Paris. The gardener had Fascist leanings and thought the Germans were correct and France should carve her future on the German oak. That was in the beginning. Recently the Germans came and requisitioned two of his three calves. They gave him the customary paper and when the time came he went to the *Kommandantur* and asked to be paid. He was told to come back at a certain date. Came the date and he went and was told to come another day. He complied. He went again. His tenacity must have irritated the Germans. They kicked him out and he left without his money. Livid with rage, the gardener sold his third calf, and on the proceeds bought a wireless-set, and now every evening was listening in to London.

The banker gave us his address in Unoccupied France and said he

hoped to be there in a fortnight. I said I'd see him before we left. That afternoon, as was meet and proper, I decided to go on an ultimate good-bye binge; to say a heartfelt good-bye to Paris with red French wine charging along my veins. For that ceremony I took Harry with me, which was meet and proper, too. His crutches and the row of ribbons of the last war on his chest symbolized France as much as the red wine. It was rather a noisy affair, and in the evening we found ourselves in a *bistro* where a German sailor was sitting. He was crying. We had already met the Germans a few hours before. A column was singing and marching down the street, and we shouted, *Vaches!* which wasn't so brave because the singing drowned it. Now I went up to the sailor, and with all the solicitude in the world inquired why he was crying. The sailor said he had been at home on leave in Berlin and several of the houses in his street had been destroyed by wicked English bombs, and some of his friends had ceased to be Germans owing to those bombs.

"How terrible," I said, and we rushed out to go and celebrate elsewhere the good tidings.

I helped Harry home, and the crutches got in the way of both of us. And I'll go to England. In the hotel in which Harry lived we sat for a while and talked, and a woman was sitting there in the lounge, too. She was faintly familiar. I recognized her. She was the woman who stood on the stairs on the evening of 13th June and was brushing up her German. She recognized me, too, and said with a smile:

"You remember the evening we stood and waited for the Germans? Well, we'll be standing there again some day waiting for the English."

I dodged the curfew and as the cobbles of the rue Gabrielle made more noise than expediency demanded, I felt elated and almost sorry to leave Paris behind without having first seen the English arrive. I could indulge in such thoughts since my going was an established fact.

Every hour of the last days stands out clearly like so many parts of a mosaic. I can pick each out and put it back unhesitatingly into its rightful place. It was a rising crescendo and the fortissimo was approaching. But the day after our beano came a little incident that wasn't crescendo at all. It was still in the morning and the bell rang and I said, 'Please, Christ, don't let it be the Gestapo.' I went to the door and there stood two men and a woman: Germans all three of them. One of them asked in French if I were the painter who used to sell paintings in the summer. I said I was and quickly added that I was doing no work nowadays and had nothing to sell. The

man said he had heard of me from a certain German officer who bought several water-colours of mine and they wanted to have a look round my *atelier*. This was my *atelier*, wasn't it? I said it was but I had moved my paintings elsewhere and . . . The woman was walking straight into the flat. I stood before her, and with the smile of a man of the world to a woman of the world I said I was sorry, but a lady of little repute had spent the night with me and she wouldn't appreciate it if her sleep were disturbed. The German woman gave me a murderous look. They remained there, purposeful, and then I said if they wanted to buy pictures I would take them to a shop not far from the house. That didn't move them either.

"The lady is getting up," I said. "I can hear her. You must go." I pushed them out and they accepted the next best thing and asked me to take them to the picture shop. We walked together and the man who had spoken first now said in that intense German whisper to which I had listened for four months.

"You aren't French, are you?" "No, I'm Hungarian." A barrage of questions followed. In the shop they were something of a flop, and it was clear they hadn't the faintest desire to buy a picture. The questions continued to fly around me. Finally, the woman asked whether they could come another time and look at my paintings: there surely must be some pictures left there and they would like to see them very, very much. I gave them a date for Sunday.

On Sunday I would be gone.

"They look like *flics*," the dealer's wife said when they were gone. The dealer was a friend of mine, a typical Parisian of the XVIIIe, and I told them I was going to England. "Tell the English I didn't want to get myself killed for ten sous a day," the dealer said. I promised I'd tell them. So I do.

His wife asked me if I'd like to see an English leaflet. I said, naturally. So she showed me one. I looked at it aghast; then I understood.

"This isn't an English leaflet," I said. "The Germans made this leaflet to discredit the English, to make them ridiculous. The cunning swine."

The leaflet declared that by 11th November British troops would be marching up the Champs Elysées. The war would be over by then. In the near future British troops would land all along the coast between Dunkerque and Brest. President Roosevelt was sending thousands and thousands of Flying Fortresses, and one of those Fortresses was enough to destroy a large town. Now I understood why my charwomen and workmen friends spoke so mysteriously of

coming tremendous events and that the war would be won by Armistice Day. It's no good saying that an intelligent person would laugh when reading such stuff. First of all very few people are intelligent, and people who suffer and hope and pray listen more readily to their hearts than to reasoned thinking. One further proof that the leaflet was one of the devastating methods of German propaganda. And I thought again of the hard task that faced England in her struggle against the Hun.

In the evening Thérèse came with the news that the next day she would get me the permit that would see me across the line. I was glad to hear that. We could thus take some luggage with us. We arranged to meet the next morning at eleven and I was to bring six photographs of myself and six photographs of Nona. I was a little before my time for our appointment, and sat outside the café and watched the Germans, detachedly. They were going out of my life, and if we met again I hoped the advantage wouldn't be completely theirs. Thérèse came, took the photographs and I asked her to lunch with me near the Cité.

I had two hours to kill and the thought came to me to go to Notre Dame and say good-bye to it, too. I stood for a considerable time outside the church. How many water-colours of the Notre Dame had I sold! It was with a sort of proprietory look that I gazed at it. I went to the bridge and there beneath it were a tug and a barge; they came straight out of Robert's picture, the one I sold to an infantry sergeant. Then I went inside the cathedral.

The grey lorries outside the church had prepared me, yet it was with disgust that I saw the huge mass of Germans moving about, and crunch, crunch their boots went. To the right was a shrine literally covered with tricolours. Candles were burning, and as they flickered they sent light and intermittent shadows on to the red, blue and white of the banners, and only white on those who knelt before the cross and the flags. Tired faces, they must have got so tired waiting in queues, waiting for news from their prisoners. It was a sad crowd of people, all very earnest and the German boots crunching behind them.

This, if ever, was a moment to pray for France, and I knelt and let my eyes rest on the banners, and my ears kept out the noise of the boots. Later I got up and noticed that a nun was looking at me. As I moved away she seemed to follow me. There was a timid, questioning look in her eyes. I stopped and asked, "What is it, *ma sœur?*" In a little old voice she asked if I were English. I couldn't disappoint her. I said I was. "How happy I am," she sighed. Then

she asked very seriously that, *n'est-ce-pas*, England would win the war? It was, she said, written in the sky.

The boots crunched and crunched.

"I'm from the provinces," she went on. "I've been here a week. They come and they come and they come. Endless. It's terrible." She shook her head and then she said, "Come, monsieur, follow me." I followed her through the forest of Germans and she stopped before the main altar beside one of the pillars. "Look at that," she whispered. "I know it's going to give you much pleasure."

A memorial tablet was on that column with the British coat-of-arms on the top and underneath it, in both languages, the inscription to the Glory of God and the one million British soldiers who fell in the Great War of 1914–18, most of whom are buried in France. It was friendly to see the Lion and the Unicorn again, and moving to read those simple words. I stood there for a while, both of us were silent, and I felt like bursting into tears.

I was positively getting light-headed in that wave of crescendo.

"Thank you very much," I said to the nun.

"Nothing will ever separate our two countries," she said. "Is it not so?"

I said indeed it was, and I was leaving for England to fight for that. She wished me God-speed and would pray that *Notre Dame de Paris* should see me safely to London. The candles flickered and the shadows rose and descended on the banners, and in a smelly crowd of Germans I elbowed my way to the square.

I involuntarily glanced at the sky, looking for the sign the nun had spoken of.

The restaurant was full, chiefly Germans. German noise and German voices. Thérèse was already there and looked startlingly pale. Her face was always pale.

"Got it?" I asked. "No," she said. I raised my eyebrows. "I have very bad news for you." "What is it? Tell me." "I can't tell you here. Tell you after lunch." "You don't suppose I'm going to enjoy my lunch with bad news coming at the end of it. Tell me here. There's so much noise. Nobody would hear it." "All right. You're wanted by the Germans." "You're pulling my leg." "Pulling your leg? There's been a warrant out for you since Monday."

This was Thursday, 17th October. My first reaction was that I felt flattered. Very flattered. It was inconceivable that with a war on and the rest of it the Germans found time to bother about me. It was too much of an honour. I was overwhelmed.

"Don't grin," Thérèse said. "Sorry, I can't help it."

Irritating vagueness comes into my story again. So I can only say that in trying to get those passes Thérèse and her connections found out that I was on the list the Germans sent out weekly. The Paris police had instructions to arrest me and hand me over to them.

"I don't believe it," I said.

That exasperated her. Then I asked her why they didn't come and arrest me? They knew my address. Two of the Gestapo had called on me about a month ago. Since Thérèse had been living in the vicinity of red tape longer than is good for anybody, she was astonished at my lack of knowledge, and it may be said at my lack of intelligence, too. In September, she explained, not without pity, they came to me because I'd been denounced as being English. Now I was wanted for something else. Hence another pigeon-hole was in charge of the case and that pigeon-hole didn't know my address; it couldn't guess that there was one that knew it. But with the efficient Germans it stood to reason that sooner or later the pigeon-holes would connect up. Then I'd be in for it. It was the practice of the Germans to order the French police to find a person: the police didn't go out of its way to look for him. It had a good excuse. The dossiers of foreigners at the Préfecture de Police had been destroyed. So they couldn't really know whether you resided in Paris or elsewhere; or were gone altogether.

"But any moment the pigeon-holes might get together," Thérèse aid; "so you'relost if you remain in Paris." That was logical. I thought of the two men and woman who came the day before; but they knew my address. It didn't fit. (Many things didn't fit those days; I wasn't, however, a fool to find out or try to make them fit.)

"What do they want me for?"

"I think sabotage. Did you do anything?"

"Oh, no."

So it was the Jean business. But how? And why hadn't the girl come again?

"You must go," Thérèse said. I assured her I was going Saturday. "And you oughtn't to sleep any more at the flat." I said I'd see. "You're mad." I thought I wasn't. I just couldn't believe it, and never shall. Much too flattering.

The meal was over. We walked beside the Seine and Thérèse said that it would be best if we went to that friend of hers near the demarcation line. He'd see us across. I said first I'd see the banker again. My confidence in plutocracy had become unlimited.

Then she told me about the papers of the foreigners which had been destroyed. It deserves repetition because it fits so well into the picture of Paris falling to the Hun.

At the Préfecture de Police, in the same way as in other government departments, chaos was rampant as the Germans were approaching. The last day it must have occurred to somebody or other that the dossiers of foreigners shouldn't fall into German hands, since there were plenty of them who had been in the pay of the *Deuxième Bureau*. So the papers were going to be evacuated, and were put on a barge near the *Préfecture*. As the barge was starting to go down the river the Germans happened to be already in Paris. The bargee could see them coming to the *Préfecture*. He didn't lose his head, and with a heroic gesture scuttled the barge with its load of documents. The Germans saw the proceedings—if they hadn't they would have been told—and for days on end dragged the Seine. A lot of papers were salvaged and put to dry in the courtyard of the *Préfecture*. But the Seine had its say, too. Only few papers escaped the ravages of the river, hence the number of legible documents was insignificant.

I liked the story. When Thérèse left me I said to myself that here walks a fugitive, and it didn't elate me. I wanted to shriek with laughter.

Notwithstanding my desire to laugh, I went and packed a small suitcase with a couple of suits and a few shirts, and when darkness came I took it to Thérèse's house. The rest of my belongings would remain behind and I'd never see them again. You pick up all sorts of odds and ends as you stumble from your cradle to the other receptacle and you cling to them because they become part of yourself. Thus I said good-bye to many things.

Nona only said, "What were you up to?" when I told her I was wanted by the Germans.

"Nothing," I said.

"I see," she said.

We decided to tell nobody that we were going. One anonymous letter was enough. That night in a pub, where I was having my last talk with Henri, an old workman of the district gave me a quantity of glances, over-brimming with meaning. Those glances grew to such proportions that I left Henri and went over to him. He pulled me into a corner and whispered heavily into my ear.

"I'll hide you. I don't mind if they shoot me. I want to help the English."

One more beautiful memory to take away from Paris. I thought I'd spend the night in my flat and with a lot of cunning sent Henri to have a look whether any policeman or Gestapo were waiting outside my door. Nobody was at my door. So I went home and

slept for the last time at *Numéro* 13. I rose at six. There was cunning and strategy in my rising so early. The Gestapo had come at eight in the morning. So there was no danger before that hour. I gave my flat a last look, which focused on the spot where my friend had died, and came down into the dark square. There a curious pang shot through me. No, it didn't shoot. It stopped in the middle, and was with me while my eyes tried to eat themselves through the darkness to get an unforgetting last look at the scene of all that beauty, disgust, despair, and hope. Then I hurried down the stairs.

Darkness was everywhere, yet the queues were forming before butchers and grocers, and now and then a German patrol would march along. The queues were silent, like those that had prayed in Notre Dame; the German boots were making the same sound. And because fancy comes easily before a long journey, Paris that moment seemed to me like the dark inside of a church where you wait and kneel and pray and are full of despair and weariness, and then suddenly the lights go up like a miracle and the bell rings out and the organ makes you rise and soar though your knees are hard against the floor. The first candles, I said to myself, have already been lighted by the resistance of England.

I took the *Métro*, and because now the *Métro* belonged to the finality of things, I read again very carefully the instructions in German to German soldiers coming into Paris. They had appeared immediately after the occupation. Not to hobnob with the population, not to walk arm-in-arm with women, and not to sit on bar-stools. Apparently bar-stools were a matter of *Weltanschauung*, too. So this war wasn't only for butter: it was to make the world safe for bar-stools, too. I walked about, and then, when *Webers* in the rue Royale opened, I went inside. I sat near the window. Nona was to meet me at ten.

In the street several German women shuffled along. I don't allude to the *Mädchen in Uniform* whom a Frenchwoman had summed up in their and my presence most appropriately: *Comme elles sont moches, les poules Boches*; but to civilians they were *moches*, too. The world must be made safe for decent-looking women. The French said those German women were evacuees from Hamburg and other places the R.A.F. bombed.

Two German officers sat near me; their attaché-cases were on the table. Though they spoke in low voices I caught the meaning of their conversation. It was about the English having bombed Berlin. They didn't like it; that weeping sailor hadn't liked it, either.

Those officers considered it an impertinence, an affront. Then Nona came. I could see her as she came out of the *Métro* station at the Madeleine. Now, at last, we only spoke French. That was considered cunning by me, too.

First we went to say good-bye to Mr. Squibb. He was shrouded in his years, and somehow our going seemed to him very far from the present which was eighty-two years old.

"I'm going to watch the papers," he said, "to see every time a book of yours comes out."

Then we went to the banker, and I told him I relied on him to find a way out for us across the demarcation line. "Wait," he said, and went out of the room. "Leave it to him," I said.

He came back and told us to go by train to a certain town that was comparatively far from the line. Such towns weren't watched. There we should go to a certain hotel, see the proprietor and give him the name of a certain rich (that goes without saying) friend of his, and the *hôtelier* would have us taken to Vichy by car. "By car?" "By car. It's going to cost you a thousand francs each."

We parted, saying we'd meet again on the other side quite soon. I never saw or heard of him again.

That day we lunched with the Englishwoman who came back, and in the restaurant there was a Belgian friend of hers who said he was going to Le Touquet for the winter.

"I'd like to be the first to welcome them," he said. "I'll open up a bar there," the Englishwoman said. "Call it the Firing Squad," the Belgian said.

As Nona and I walked up the Champs Elysées we saw the sign in Heaven of which the nun had spoken. Anyway, it was its up-to-date equivalent.

When nine o'clock came we went for the last time to Thérèse and listened for the last time to London in Paris. We brought the little luggage we were taking with us. We would come and fetch it at dawn: the train was going early. I wasn't sleeping any more on the Butte.

Nona had been up and had seen Joe. He was worried, and said he hadn't seen me the whole day. Did the Germans get me? She had seen Robert and Michael, too. There would be plenty of talk after we disappeared.

Georges asked for my address in London. I gave it to him. It was queer writing down an address in London. When we went out I

said to Nona, "Let's go up to the Butte for a last drink." She said, "No, all that is finished." It was.

First we went to an hotel we knew. The proprietor was sitting at the desk. When I went up to him and said we wanted to spend the night there he said in a low voice, "The place is full of the Gestapo. Look, there's one of them beside that column. Don't sleep here." So we went out. In one of the little streets, that were like rivulets going off in all sorts of directions, we stopped beside a notice that said, *Hôtel*. I looked in. It was dark, but you could hear the radio upstairs saying *les Français parlent aux Français*. "We're sleeping here," I said.

A little old woman and a little old man with a little elderly daughter sat round the radio, and it was going full blast, telling the French that Darlan had sentenced Admiral Muselier to death. The little old people looked at us and gave us a room and promised to wake us at half-past four and never gave us the registration papers. I said I'd sneak out for a last drink. There was a pub in the next building.

In the pub there were two men of the *Luftwaffe* and the proprietor. They were educated fellows, those men of the *Luftwaffe*. They spoke French well and were telling the pub-keeper what a good time France could have had if she hadn't joined the English or if she had accepted the Führer's peace offer a year ago. I drank my drink in haste, and from the door looked back. The pub-keeper, with a tired, drooping double chin, was saying, "*Mea culpa*. That's Latin, and it means it's our fault."

VICHY WATER

CHAPTER ELEVEN

"*Merde, mon petit,*" Georges said, and I took the two suitcases and we went. The station was full and the train was full. We stood in the corridor, and in the utter darkness of the black-out I felt the crowd moving, tumbling and jostling. Two German soldiers walked up and down on the platform. They carried rifles and hand grenades, and small torches on their great-coats made a luminous circle round them. It was as it would be in the New Order, with all the light belonging only to the Germans and the rest panting and stumbling in the dark. As the train pulled out I said to myself, 'Good God, I'm on my way to England.'

We stood in the corridor most of the way. Though the train was packed there were no Germans visible. It sounded foolish to me that we were speaking in French. Nevertheless, we kept it up. We arrived at the little town with the sun beating down on the station and on the German stationmaster. We walked straight out and found the hotel.

I didn't quite know how to start off, so I asked for a room. There was an old woman with white hair at the desk and the maid stood beside her. A lot of luggage was piled up in the hall. I said we were going up to our room, and I wished to speak to the proprietor, who was the old woman's son. He should come up. Then the maid said, "These are waiting, too, to go across." I stared at her. So she went on to explain that about twelve people were in the hotel waiting for M. Marius to come and take them to Vichy in his cars. M. Marius was in Paris, but he would arrive around four. You see that luggage? That's all going across. I was amazed. The proprietor came up to our room and said the cars had crossed over from Vichy two days ago and he expected Marius back that night. It was doubtful whether there would be room for us. Among others, there were two ladies with two children, and most of these people had seen him in Paris and fixed an appointment for to-day. But I wasn't to worry. If there's no room that day we could leave some other time. Marius crossed the border twice a week.

"How does he do it?" I asked.

"That's his business. But you'll see it's safe. Though it used to be safer a little while ago. Then you just paid the German officers on duty and they let you through. But now they've been changed."

Marius and his magic cars didn't turn up that afternoon. The proprietor said it would be Monday. All he hoped for was that no

more people would turn up, because that would spoil our chances completely. So we had to wait till Monday.

On Sunday afternoon I was in the bar of the hotel and there was the proprietor's mother behind the counter. The bar was empty. She had a lot of white hair and a kind, youngish face. Suddenly she leaned over and whispered to me. "Are you English?" I wondered what was coming. "What makes you think that?" I asked. "I was on the landing this morning and I heard you and madame speak English." "She's American," I said. She brushed that aside: "If you're English I'll see that Marius takes you along to-morrow even if the rest of them have to stay behind. I must help you to get to England and help us."

Then I was frank with her. I said I was partly running from the Germans but chiefly wanted to get to England to help the cause to which both France and England belonged. We became great friends. She found nothing admirable about the Germans. They were dishonest. As an example, she told me that a German officer had been drinking in her bar and it was raining, and he asked her if he could borrow her bicycle as he'd some distance to go in the torrent. She felt sorry for him and let him have the bicycle, which he faithfully promised to send back next day. That was two months ago and she hadn't heard of him or the bicycle again. They had requisitioned her sheets and didn't pay for them. They were a pest. She couldn't understand that anybody could work with them. I thought of a friend in Paris who a few days ago had proudly told me he had met the German general in command at Serge Lifar's cocktail party. Or what about those three who should have known better? Borotra, Chevalier, and Guitry?

"They are all traitors who like them," the old woman said. She told me that a great French lady she knew, a Royalist, had been arrested by the Germans and was sentenced to death. The American Embassy was trying to save her. I asked why the Germans had taken her. "She printed and distributed leaflets," the old woman said.

That evening Nona and I dined in the little town's best restaurant, where at the best table sat a German colonel.

The following morning I stood at the window of my room and a company of German infantry was marching in the dust. They were singing. They sang of the beautiful road that led to the beautiful Fatherland. I turned to Nona, and said, "I hope that some day I'll help to speed them on that road."

. . . . .

A great commotion started around three o'clock. Marius had arrived with two cars and a trailer for the luggage. There was noise and running about and all prospective passengers were trying to get at him. The old woman pulled him aside and I heard her say to him that he must take Nona and me without fail, and her story was that Nona was sick and was going to Vichy to see a specialist. He said there was no room, but she persisted, and then without waiting for him to make his own decision she ordered the maid to put our luggage into the car and pushed us into the car too. The car was full. The other car was equally full. The roofs of the cars were packed high with luggage; the trailer was a sea of luggage. In our small car we were five inside and two sat beside Marius. While the luggage was loaded some German soldiers stopped and, smoking their cigarettes, they stood and watched the proceedings. There was a platinum blonde on the seat with Nona and me and two men sat in front of us. One of them had recently come from the free zone; he had some business to attend to in Paris and was now returning to the world of Vichy. We had a talk in the hotel bar and he was decidedly anti-English. No Frenchman, he said, would forgive Oran and Dakar. The Germans? Well, during his two days' stay he found they were reasonable. He was in business. They made it easy for his firm to carry on. Laval? Oh, he was the best man France had. An astute politician, and he was purging the country of Communists. Anyway, Germany would win the war. After my friends, the charwomen and workmen of Paris, he was a wet sponge. It should have been a warning, but in a crescendo there's no room for a warning. Anyway, you can't hear it.

It was a hot dusty afternoon. But the countryside was lovely in its autumn fulfilment. It was mature; and it was gold and blue and as the sun was going the gold gave way to the blue.

The second car had some engine trouble. We stopped and Marius fixed it up. He said we were late: he wouldn't risk it in the dark. Headlights would betray us and the Germans were more on the alert. So we drove faster and a sort of conversation went on between driver and passengers. He was a short man with insignificant features. He said the last time the Uhlans that guarded the frontier nearly caught him. He must give up this lucrative job, otherwise he was bound to land in jail.

There was a sack full of letters in the car; for you couldn't write abroad from Occupied France. You paid him five francs to take a letter across. The man was making a fortune. I sent up a lot of little prayers and smoked one cigarette after the other. The platinum blonde told us that if the Germans caught us it would mean five days

in prison. But in my case it might be something very different. I figured out the course Marius was following. In a large sweep he was getting nearer the demarcation line. Towards six o'clock we turned off the *route nationale* and were on a by-pass. It was deserted until we passed a German car by the side of the road with the driver working on the engine; he looked up and watched us placidly. Then the road was empty again. Further on two German cyclists came towards us. They passed us and then the cars, with the trailer bobbing up and down, turned on to a cart track.

"We're getting to the critical stage," the platinum blonde said. The man who liked Laval was sweating profusely and looked frightened. Then we got to a lone farmstead and the cars stopped. The farmer and his daughter came up and the girl said that two soldiers were working on the telephone wires not far away. Marius told her to go and watch them and report when they went. There was authority in his voice. I hadn't suspected him of it. The girl took a bicycle and made off. Marius told us we could get out and stretch our legs. Both cars gave up their load of passengers. We were thirteen, including the two boys who travelled on the laps of their mothers in the second car.

There was perfect peace around us. The sun was going but its warmth was on the calm fields and the trees were blue and the sky was a lighter blue and it all belonged to tranquillity.

"I wish to God we could stay here for ever," Nona said. I wished it, too. The girl was back and the peace bubble burst. She said the Germans had gone.

"*En voiture*," Marius commanded. He was without a doubt a captain of men. We got into the car and moved off. The track was bad and the car jumped and lurched. The admirer of Laval was in agony. The car took sharp turnings, and because there was plenty of bush about, you didn't know till the last second what awaited you round the bend. On a tree there hung a wooden board. *Ligne de Démarcation*. Marius was driving slowly, looking back to see if the second car was following. The track straightened with bushes and trees on both sides. We drove through an empty water-bed and we jumped to the ceiling.

"Here it comes," Marius said.

Ahead of us a strip of asphalt was visible. The car took a sharp bend: it took it very slowly. There was more of the asphalt and when we got on to it, we were on the main road between the two frontier-posts, and because of the curve of the road we saw neither of them. Marius accelerated and then, with much oncoming wind, the road was a straight line and the French post with the three-

coloured barrier was before us. Had there been any German soldiers patrolling the road it would have been just too bad, as the saying goes.

To see French uniforms and French helmets was a joy.

"How human they look after the Germans," Nona said.

The barrier was raised and the cars rolled into Unoccupied France. I could almost hear the sounds of Bow Bells. But they were far distant.

We arrived in Vichy late in the evening. We all got off at a hotel near the station. I stood drinks all round, and I don't remember how the talk started but I said to the platinum blonde that Nona was American.

"Really?" she said. "We thought you were both English."

So it had been quite unnecessary to talk French in the car. I was moved. These French people hadn't objected to travel with strangers they thought were English, though Adolf only knew the mess they would have got into had they been caught with fleeing British. That neither of us were has nothing to do with that.

I bought a *Paris Soir*, the unoccupied zone edition. It published English *communiqués*. For me that was a great improvement. The tone of the paper wasn't anti-English. Later I found out that *Paris Soir* was the least anti-English of the papers. In the bar of the hotel there was a large poster with the old head of the *Maréchal*. Underneath it a quotation from one of his speeches. "I have spoken to you the words of a father; now I speak the words of a chief. Follow me." Those words seemed rather one up on God. One thing was certain, that the subtle methods of propaganda hadn't been learned by the Vichy people, though the masters of the art were so near to them. I slept well that night and, without knowing it, was saying good-bye to beds for a considerable time to come.

Next day, 22nd October, the sun was bright, and we went for a walk round Vichy. I still maintain that the Pétain government can only be appreciated by seeing its headquarters. Hotels where pleasantly invalid old English and American women had killed their useless time with bridge and talking of the dear vicar at home or of the Seattle Social Register, had been turned into ministries and the *Garde Républicaine*, with white gloves, presented arms to men who used the same folding door as the local bank manager of the branch office in suburbia had used a year ago. It was like a play that had been advertised as a farce and only after you indulged in a lot of giggles and laughter did you realize that you ought to vomit and

blush. It was a disgusting joke. I often wonder if old Pétain, who had known the English, didn't feel that sense of strength and of a permanently stout heart that even the old women of suburbia and Devon had left behind? He was a passing phase, and those hotel walls would listen again to talks of charity bazaars, which are infinitely preferable to talks of treason.

Nona went to the American Embassy and was told that foreigners needed a *sauf-conduit* to travel.

"That won't stop us," I said. "Nothing is going to stop us any more."

The streets were full of men in ragged uniforms wearing armlets that said *démobilisé*. They had no civilian clothing and there was no home for them to go to; decrepit and tired they looked. For all the white gloves of the *Garde Républicaine* you felt there was misery around you. But there were no Germans. And that was bliss.

We walked past a military hospital. On a bench in front of the hospital there sat a Moroccan soldier. His right leg was missing. It had been amputated above the knee. He sat there immobile, gazing into nothingness. It hurt me to think that he must be contemplating the world in which he gave his leg for the glory of that France he was taught to admire. The giving of the leg was his part of the bargain. He got for it the downfall of France, the disgrace of capitulation, and the farce called Vichy. There was a tree behind the bench. Just as immobile and contemplative as the soldier.

There lived in Vichy a friend of Nona's, a Frenchwoman married to an American. We went to see her in the afternoon. She thought it was a great thrill to have got across from Paris and a greater thrill to go on to Marseilles and then to England.

"How I envy you!" she said. She asked some friends in for tea. Old Frenchwomen, members of the French nobility, Royalists. They spoke with hatred of Vichy and asked me a million questions about Paris and when would England win? They were rather sweet old women. They spoke of this, that and the other, and one of them said that an ancestor of hers had nearly had his head cut off by the *sans-culottes*.

"One of my ancestors," another sweet old woman tartly said, "did have his head cut off." The first sweet old woman was squashed.

The door opened and a male guest came in. He clicked his heels and gave the Nazi salute.

"Good God!" I whispered, "is he a Boche?"

"No, he's a high official in the Foreign Office."

"What about going?" I said to Nona. We went. I would most probably have stayed on if he had really been a Hun.

Our train was leaving for Marseilles at seven in the evening. We returned to the hotel and there I bought one of those printed post-cards that were the only means of official communication between the two zones. I sent it to Thérèse as we had arranged before leaving Paris. Now she would know I was safe on the other side and would post the letter and the key of my flat to the concierge. In that letter I asked her to look after my things if that were possible, and I'd be back in Paris *après la victoire*. As I sat at the desk Nona came up and said:

"I wonder where you'll be in a week's time."

"In jail."

We laughed: it was a joke. One shouldn't make such jokes.

At the station a megaphone informed us that the papers of all the travellers would be controlled on the platform. So, after the German, there was now the French police and French red tape and the eternal identity business again. If you come to consider it, that identity paper business seemed like a hollow joke after every spy and Fifth Columnist had got away with it so perfectly. Now I guessed that all the nuisance and faults of the old régime would be found in the unoccupied zone with the crimes of the new system added to it. The detectives found our papers in order and forgot to ask for *sauf-conduits*.

"Everything is going like clockwork," I said to Nona as the train pulled out. We changed at Lyons; I went into the railway bar and found it empty, for it was late. The picture of Pétain, together with a few quotations, hung on the wall. I had a short talk with the man behind the counter and he spoke against the English. Oran and Dakar, and the Maréchal had saved France. Because I no longer had any fear of the Germans, I told him where he got off, and back in the train again I told Nona that apparently the people of the unoccupied zone deserved a few months' occupation; that would make them speak differently. The train went southward and I began thinking how it was only a year ago that I had left the south and what an inconceivable year it had been. So much gone; and I felt very grateful to Nona for having come with me.

As you come out of the station in Marseilles you get to the steps that lead to the Boulevard Gomier, and you behold the town with the mountains and the gilt steeple of Notre Dame de Garde. But it was dark when we got to the steps and there were but a few lights

that had escaped the willy-nilly black-out to reveal the town that was going to bring more misery to me than there are poplars on the roads of France.

We decided to spend the day in Marseilles and then to go on to Aix-en-Provence. I wanted to see the Englishman, and a Marseillais to whom the English woman publican had given me a letter. We ate breakfast in a café on the Canebière, and Nona was tired and I went to look for an hotel. It wasn't easy. They were full, for that was the period when the gutters of the Continent had emptied their filth into Marseilles. Eventually, I found a room in an hotel on the Canebière and Nona went and lay down and I said I would fetch her at lunch-time.

First, I went to the Frenchman who was a noisy son of the Midi with an exceedingly rosy outlook on life and on things in general. Oh, he loved England and the English. He was in the shipping business and since the armistice his business was going to pieces. When, oh when, would the English win the war to restore his business? Something is missing here, I said to myself.

He would help me to get to England. It was easy, mighty easy. You had, however, to be careful, there were plenty of police spies around looking for foreigners trying to get away. But he knew the ropes. He would ring up a friend of his who kept an hotel and get moderate prices for us. I asked how much the trip to Gibraltar cost? He said that depended. The German and Austrian refugees who wished to get to North or South America were raising the price. They were people with money and now and then a scare would run through them and then they were ready to pay any price. They were vehemently disliked in Marseilles. But surely for me, he said, who wanted to go to England to fight the common enemy, a reasonable price would be made. He would find out.

Then I went to see the Englishman. I hadn't seen one for ages. I was received by a sort of secretary and he asked me if I were a British subject?

"He doesn't receive foreigners," he condescendingly said. I said I wasn't a British subject but I wanted to see him on an urgent matter. I had quite a lot to tell him. The secretary said I could write down my name and then he put the paper before him on the desk and went on placidly smoking his pipe.

"Why don't you take it in?" I asked. He looked aghast.

"But he has a visitor. You don't think I'd disturb him for you? He's speaking to a British subject." I said I hadn't any time to wait. I would come back in the afternoon. When I told Nona, she

said, "I told you so. You'll meet that all along." I supposed I would.

I went back in the afternoon and the secretary was more friendly, and he said he had arranged an interview for me. Then I was taken in and saw Nona's friend's friend, and he was charming and he was a cross between the Old School Tie and the *Tatler*. He listened attentively to me and was keen on giving the impression that he was a man of mystery, the Lawrence of Marseilles or something like that. But because I hadn't yet the necessary experience to understand and deal with the Lawrences of Marseilles (there was a fine crop of them) I took him seriously and was greatly cheered when he declared that he would help me to get out of Marseilles if I didn't find a way out alone. He expected to be leaving soon, too. For the time being the French left the English alone, but that couldn't last. We were both of us apprehensive about the encounter between Hitler and Laval that was taking place that day.

I met Nona at the *Cintra*, and we sat near the window: the Vieux Port around us; the Transbordeur, an Eiffel Tower of bridges, before us; and a ship called *Abbé Faria* leaving for Château d'If. The bar was packed, the streets were full, and I wondered if in Marseilles anybody ever did anything else than walk about or sit in bars. Doctor Johnson said, 'Sir, you may wonder': Doctor Johnson was usually right. We dined at the *Pascal* and Nona wanted to eat *bouillabaisse*. I hate *bouillabaisse*. She had her way. During the meal I said, "Everything is going perfectly well."

When we walked back to the hotel I suddenly said I wasn't coming in yet. I wanted to have a walk round.

"Please don't," Nona said. "I don't want you to walk about alone."

"I'm not five years old."

The door of a bar opened (there's a bar in every house on the Canebière) and the light picked out Nona as she stood there. That was one of the pictures I took with me.

I walked up the Canebière and it was heavily crowded. Then, for reason or reasons unknown, I crossed over to the other side and turned to the right, and I was walking up the Avenue Léon Gambetta, of which I never had heard and which was just as unknown to me as any other street of Marseilles. There was a large block of houses and about five bars were ranged one beside the other. Choosing one at random I walked in, and the chairs were red and there was a short staircase leading to more red chairs. Or maybe there weren't stairs: my memory is intermittent about it; owing, I suppose, to

the nausea which is with me even as I write of it. I went to the counter and had a drink: a brandy and soda. I looked round—few customers. At a table sat three soldiers in hospital blue: crutches were leaning against the wall. I looked more carefully. All three of them were bereft of a leg. I felt the same pity as I had felt for the Arab in Vichy. It made me think of Harry, too. I gave twenty francs to the woman behind the counter and told her to give the money to them and I hoped they would have a drink on it. I finished my drink and started for the door. One of the wounded staggered up to me.

"Monsieur," he said, "it's very kind of you to give us this money, but we aren't *clochards*, and if you want us to take it, you must have a drink with us." I thought that was nice of them and sat down at their table. Because that crescendo, that intoxication caused by the resistance of England and the rebirth of the French, was more and more with me, I said to them that the day would come when their lost legs would be revenged and they hadn't lost them in vain. England would win the war and France would be set free.

"I don't mind who wins the war," one of them savagely said. "Let the Germans and the English kill off each other. It was always France that was killed. It's now England's turn."

"They fight," I said.

"Let them fight. Let them learn what fighting is. London in ruins? How many times has France been in ruins?" I almost regretted that I gave them twenty francs. Then, materializing from the red background, a tall, fair soldier, wearing khaki and a beret, popped up. He gave me a brilliant smile and spoke to me in English. It was the best English I have heard a foreigner speak; no trace of an accent.

"The proprietor has just told me," he said, "that you gave some money to these unfortunate men. Only an Englishman would do that. Very handsome of you, sir."

"You speak remarkably good English," I said. He sat down, all smiles.

"I used to be interpreter with the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders in the last war. Those were days. We won that war and didn't lose it like this one. It's terrible for an old soldier like me. There is only one thing I want."

"What's that?" I asked.

"To go to Blighty." I asked where he came from. He said he was from Lille. That was the town of Jean. "It's nice to speak to you," I said, ordering him a drink. "These poor chaps here don't seem to be keen on England." "Don't mind them, sir. They're just ignorant peasants. You live in Marseilles?"

I said I came from Paris. That interested him; which was natural enough. He asked me many questions, and I spoke of the Germans and told him of the English plane writing smoke letters in the sky above the Champs Elysées. It was on Friday, the day before we left Paris. It was after lunch. Nona and I were walking up the avenue and everybody was gazing skyward, necks craned, happy, triumphant smiles on all faces; and the policemen looked up too and laughed, but a German officer, who was walking in the same direction as us, looked rigidly ahead. I looked up. An English plane was writing the word *Confiance* in the sky. The nun in Notre Dame had been right. That sign in the sky had belonged, too, to the rising tide of my light-headedness. It was only after the letters had begun to fade and join the white clouds that the *Luftwaffe* went up. It made a lot of noise; that was all it made. The soldier was thrilled. He lamented the mentality of the people in the unoccupied zone.

"There's hardly a Frenchman left," he said, "a real Frenchman." I leaned a little forward as I said that there were but two Frenchmen left, General de Gaulle and Admiral Muselier. He agreed with me. Then he asked if I intended to get to England. His question reminded me of the several warnings I had about *agents provocateurs*. So I cautiously said I didn't know. "I want to go," the soldier said. "And I'll get there. The first step is Casablanca." "Why Casablanca?" "There you can always find a ship for Lisbon and if one only had the money one could bribe the seamen to stop at Gibraltar." He gave me a sidelong glance and I thought he would ask for money. "An old soldier never stops fighting. He goes on. I'm going on to Blighty."

The three wounded were getting fighting drunk. They had a loud row and the red of the bar was too pervasive: it was surrounding me too close, and a sudden deep desire caught me to go and leave the place behind and to be with Nona. I wished I'd stayed with her. I said good-bye and got up and wished I could take a jump and be in our hotel. As I went out the soldier left as well; he walked beside me and went on talking of Blighty. But I had had enough of him and of the talk about Blighty, and since he was talking and keeping beside me I said good-night to him and turned into the pub that was nearest, which meant, in Marseilles, that the pub was just at my elbow. That seemed the simplest way of getting rid of him. In the pub I ordered a whisky-and-soda and drank it, impatiently waiting for a few minutes to elapse before I hurried to Nona. The door opened and the soldier came in. His mouth, his eyes, his ears, too, were all smiles.

"Excuse me for following you in here, sir," he said. "But you

have a kind heart and you must understand that the life of an old soldier is misery in a defeated betrayed country. I thought you might be interested to help me to Blighty." "I'm sorry," I said. "I don't think I could help you." "I can't even afford a drink, or buy cigarettes." "Have a drink with me." I ordered another whisky. "Here are ten francs for cigarettes." He thanked me a lot and then I left and was alone in the street. The bar must have had two entrances. Anyway, I now was in a street I couldn't recollect and because that wish to see Nona was pressing me on, I thought it was a nuisance and asked a passer-by how to get back to the Canebière. He showed me the direction and I started off impatiently and then a policeman came straight to me and told me to follow him.

"You want my papers?" I asked.

"We'll see later on," he said. "Hurry up." I wasn't frightened or anything like that. I've heard of continuous round-ups in Marseilles and the only annoying part was that it would keep me an hour or so from Nona. He took me to the *Permanence*, and there in a great barren room I was told to wait. A drunken man was pushed in a little later. He walked straight to the end of the room and there he fell in his whole length; so far and no further his fall implied. A policeman took me into an office and there two men sat at a desk. One of them turned to me and in an aggressive voice said, "You were distributing money in the traitor de Gaulle's name. You were distributing it among French soldiers." That was a shock. "Nonsense." "Nonsense? Do you deny having given twenty francs to three *mutilés*?" "That is quite true. I gave them twenty francs because I was sorry for them." "But you gave ten francs to a soldier, too." I admitted that I had. Dear me, it did sound incriminating. "Do you deny you gave those sums in the name of ex-General de Gaulle?" "It was my money." "You're English, of course?" "No," I said, and thought I had them. "I'm Hungarian and whoever told you that I'm English was a liar. The same lie as the other." Then they both said they would keep me for the night, and one of them said if I was a person with a good record I would be let out in the morning.

"But I don't want to spend the night here," I said. Quite reasonable, if you come to think of it; but I was told I would have to. Then I got furious. I said in Paris such a thing couldn't have happened and that it was riotously funny that a man should be jugged for having given some French wounded a little money. I was livid with rage and indignation. When I saw they were adamant I became a credit to my governesses and tutors. I said if they let me go home I would come back in the morning, and I was ready to

pledge my word. They didn't want my word. Then I thought of Nona, how worried she would be, and asked if I could telephone. "To whom?" "To my wife."

That seemed to me the best and simplest way of putting it. It would make it easier for me to see her if they kept me. They said they had no objection. Then I said it would be difficult for me to say on the telephone that I was arrested.

"You needn't say that. Just tell them at the hotel to tell your wife that you are spending the night elsewhere." I couldn't help smiling. "I don't think she'd appreciate that," I said.

A policeman led me into a little room where a telephone stood on a table. Beside that table lolling in a chair was the soldier who so very much wanted to go to Blighty. Then my eyes were opened and it was a shock composed of utter disgust. I felt, and at times still feel, that it's hardly worth while to wander about in a world where such men could exist.

"You dirty cad," I spluttered. "Shut up," the policeman said not unkindly. He motioned to the soldier to go out. I rang up the hotel and told the hotel-keeper to tell Nona that I was arrested. I felt ashamed; the hotel-keeper, being a Marseilles hotel-keeper, thought it the most normal thing on earth. I rang off. Then I was taken out into the street and was shoved into a police-car and then bumped through the streets of Marseilles. My indignation was choking me. We stopped, and the policeman took me into a building and we went down stairs and he knocked on a heavy door; the door was unbolted and a heavy Corsican let us in, and my escort and the warder exchanged words in Corsican, and then I was led through a sort of corridor and there were women in the corridor. They were prostitutes, and I thought of the Butte and wished I was there, wished the Germans had taken me, shot me, for that would have been finer and nothing disgusting about it. I think I must have retained a childlike view of life, and it makes me feel sorry that it came down with a crash on the night of 23 October 1940. There was a desk, and they searched me, took all my money and cigarettes and my tie. I asked why they took my tie.

"That," the warder said with a laugh, "is the sign in France you're no longer a free man." He considered that funny and chuckled. Then he took my braces, too. There were doors on the left, in front and on the right. A heavy smell of latrines hung in the air. It was so strong that the warder, my loss of liberty, the prison, lost importance beside it. Through a spyhole in one of the doors a pallid face was staring at us. The eyes were out of proportion and the pallor was surounded by bristly stubbles. The face was elongated

by the utter despair and lack of comprehension that came from the staring eyes.

"I don't want to be with that man," I said. "Put me into a cell alone." The warder took a key and opened that door. He whispered into my ear that was the best cell and he would return my cigarettes and give me some money once the policeman was gone. So I was locked in and in a little while the warder handed through the peep-hole three hundred francs and cigarettes.

In the cell there was a long wooden contraption, like a sloping table, that filled the room. A man lay on it. In the corner was a latrine: the stench was explained. The water tank above the latrine went off every few minutes. It made a terrific din and you never knew when it would go off the next time. The man whose face I had seen was walking up and down; up and down. Polar bears do that in zoos. The other man was lying with open eyes and the attitude of his body was vacant. I looked at the wall. A guillotine was drawn on it and under it was written, '*Aux condés, aux mouchards, à Hitler le saligaud.*' I asked the roaming man what *condé* and *mouchard* meant.

"You must be a foreigner," he said. "*Condé* in Marseillais is a policeman and *mouchard* is a man who squeals on you, a man who betrays you, a man who is in the pay of the police." That was more or less the accurate description of the soldier who got me there. "Are you Italian?" "Yes," he said eagerly. "I'm an Italian."

He was going to speak, it would make prison comparatively gay for him; but I asked him where I was. His face fell and he told me I was at the *Evêché*. The *Evêché* used to be the bishop's palace, now it was the police prison. A notorious place. The door opened and a young man was pushed in. He was an American. He had been picked up in a pub of ill repute. He was drunk and indignant.

"If they don't let me out in the morning," he said, "I'll set the whole Consulate on them."

He was an amusing chap, reminiscent of the world I knew outside, so we laughed and we told each other we'd be released in the morning. We laughed more and our only hope, a very gentlemanly hope, was that nobody should make use of the latrine while we were there. The American once asked who would win the war?

"England," I said. "It stands to reason. Otherwise I wouldn't be here." It was a bit confused, but that was on account of the noise and smell of the latrine. The American, safe with the American Consulate, fell asleep. I couldn't sleep.

The Italian sat down on the sloping table and stared at the wall. I examined the wall. Some simple soul had carved, with a penknife

or a nail, a heart on the wall: a large ungainly heart it was with an arrow stabbing it, and according to rules, drops were dripping from the heart: underneath the drops was the simple caption, *A ma femme chérie Marguerite*. That longing to see Nona was very much with me and I asked God to end this farce and more than anything else that I should see her in the morning. The Lord hearkened unto me for exactly ten minutes.

The American was called around seven o'clock: I heard my name an hour later. A little man, looking like a toadstool from a damp cellar, led me across the courtyard to a small building, where several clerks were questioning a prostitute; her answers were making them laugh. Good cheer reigned. I waited for my turn and then I knew she was there, so I wasn't surprised as Nona swept into the room.

"Really, Peter, you should put your tie on," she said after we agreed we were glad to see each other. "There's nothing I want more," I fervently said. "I must tell you what happened."

"I'm not interested," she said. "Thank God, it's over."

Oh yes, she was looking at it as though the night before had been boat-race night and don't let us talk about it any more. The man behind the desk took a similar attitude. He examined my papers, found them in order, and asked if I had money. I said I had, and then he asked, laughingly, what was that about de Gaulle.

In the same spirit I laughed and said that was a lot of nonsense.

"Nowadays one shouldn't speak of him," the man said. "Perhaps some day it's going to be the right thing to speak of him." He got up and said he would take my papers to the chief and get my release signed. Nona thanked him, and we discovered that none of us had any cigarettes left. So she said she would go and get some, and I should not leave the place before she was back. I didn't; for a little later the clerk returned and, in a completely changed voice, told me to follow him, and I went and then it was awful because there was that heavy door at the bottom of the stairs, and when I was within the jail again he said I was there *à la disposition du chef de la Sûreté*. The Italian was walking up and down.

I spoke to him. I spoke to his companion, too, and they were in the same boat. They had come to France before the last war and had served in the last war in the French Army in preference to the Italian Army. They stayed on in France, married French-women, worked as Italians do with all the sweat of all the brows, not complaining, cheerful, and producing yearly a French child. They volunteered in this war and had been in the *débâcle*. When they were demobilized they returned to Marseilles to work, to keep

their large families. The Pétain government reached an agreement with Mussolini, according to which all Italians would return to Italy. These two men refused because they were Socialists, and chiefly because they felt they belonged completely to France and not to the 'stabber in the back'. The Vichy authorities decided to intern Italians who felt that way. They were arrested, and here at the *Evêché* they had been waiting eight days to be taken to an internment camp.

At the *Evêché* you only got a slice of bread a day, you had to buy your food from the jailer, and it was as fine a racket as any. These men were without money and had lived for eight days on that little bread. They had bad chills, for at the *Evêché* you don't get blankets, the idea being that according to law you shouldn't be kept there for longer than twenty-four hours.

"There's no decency left in the world," the tall Italian concluded. World without England, I said to myself, and a deep desire swept through me for them to keep me in prison, for them to sentence me for the duration, and it would be worth while. To have said that England would win the war, to have spoken of General de Gaulle who didn't want his country to stay as base as it was under Vichy, was worth it.

"You must take it easy," the smaller Italian said. Then I told them what happened to me, and dumbfounded as they were they had time for me and to gasp at the dirty trick that had been played on me.

"You must deny it," the smaller one said. "Don't let yourself be caught. They'll try all sorts of tricks on you. But say no, say no, and finally they must let you off."

"They can't blame you for speaking well of your country," they both said. "It's your duty."

"But I'm not English. I can't even say that."

"Never mind. Deny it, and they must let you out."

Then I asked who the chief of police was: they said he was a naval officer whom Darlan had put in. The occupation of France by the rue Royale was well in progress.

The day passed with the guillotine and the stabbed heart; and the latrine going off every few minutes. Towards evening things livened up. First, a young man came in and he told us in a normal voice he had just been caught stealing. He was the first thief I had come into contact with, and in the beginning I was somewhat shy. Then a batch of Corsicans were brought in: slick, dark, well dressed in a loud fashion, they were tickled to death and roared with laughter. They had been playing cards for money in a bar; the bar was raided and they were caught: after twenty-four hours they

would be released. They were cardsharpers: they said so. They were pimps, white slave traders and brothel keepers, too: they didn't say so. But everybody apart from me knew that in Marseilles. It gave them standing, a high rank. The greater the number of girls, the bigger the respect.

The cell filled up. A bunch of gentlemen arrived who thought they were girls. One of them had made advances to a nice young thing, so he ruefully told me, and the young thing turned out to be a *condé* off duty. Then a sturdy little fellow from some outlying village arrived. He had come to Marseilles to have a look at that town of sin and had been picked up for loitering and would be sent back to his village next day. He thought being at the *Evêché* was great fun, and questioned us and was disappointed to find out the Italians were there because they preferred France to Italy, I for giving money to wounded soldiers, and those fine Corsicans for a game of cards. Definitely an anticlimax. He reached the young man who joined us first. "What are you in for?" "For stealing."

The boy's face lit up: that was seeing life. It was hot and heavy; the Corsicans spoke in Corsican to the jailer, and they got wine, and I gave the jailer fifty francs so we all had wine and the Italians wept a little and the Corsicans said the whole isle of Corsica prayed for an English victory. One of them wrote on the wall, '*Vive Ciurcil.*' We lay, twenty-four of us, on the sloping table.

When I travelled I used to book both berths in a sleeper, since I did not fancy having a stranger near me: I was getting re-educated. Later in the night six men were brought in. They sat on the floor.

Around 10 a.m. I was taken by two detectives to the political department of the *Sûreté*. A pleasant-looking man, the secretary, received me. "What happened the other night?" "Nothing." "Don't tell me lies. You gave money to French soldiers and said to them that England would win the war, and there were only two Frenchman left, de Gaulle and Muselier." "Is it not allowed to say that England is going to win the war? France isn't at war with England." "No," he said, "but England is harbouring and helping de Gaulle and Muselier, whom France has condemned to death. Praising them and giving money in their name is a crime."

I had it all thought out. The wounded were three. Three men heard me say that England would win the war; I couldn't deny that. But of de Gaulle and Muselier I only spoke to the *mouchard*. By admitting the first I would give the impression I wasn't a liar. There is nothing like being naïve.

"I said England would win the war, but General de Gaulle and Admiral Muselier were not mentioned." And I shall stick to that, I

decided. One man's evidence against another's. Yes, it was cleverly thought out, but I forgot it wasn't English law I was up against but the *Code Napoléon*, that antiquated cruel system without *habeas corpus* and the prisoner guilty till proved innocent. "There are five witnesses that you spoke of those two." "It isn't true," I doggedly said.

Then he read out the soldier's evidence. It was, like its author, a nasty piece of work. The man's name was Van der Bock: I'm glad it wasn't a French name. In his statement he said that the passage about General de Gaulle was said to all of them. He was called in, and we were confronted and he upheld what he said, and I did the same. There was one question of mine that nettled him. I asked what language we were speaking at the time, and he said we had spoken in English. So I pounced on him and said I would bet the wounded didn't speak English, and that could easily be proved. So he changed his statement: I had said it to him in English and not to the wounded. I felt I had scored a point, but the secretary wasn't impressed. I was: the result of having read the lives of Marshall Hall and Lord Carson.

When we were alone the secretary told me that in the afternoon I would be confronted with the wounded, and it would depend on their evidence whether I would be released or handed over to the military authorities. I was led back to the cell. The jailer bought cigarettes for me: I did a lot of smoking and the Italians smoked with me, and now there were only we three and the girlies left. In the early afternoon the warder came to the peephole and told the tall Italian that his wife and children were outside and had asked if he was still there. The man got hysterical. He broke down, he wept, and begged the warder, with his hands clasped as in prayer, to let them see him just for a moment. The warder said that was impossible and asked if he had any message for them. He tried to speak, but his sobs kept his words back and his mouth opened and of words there were none. Bored, the Corsican jailer went away. The Italian remained on his back, gasping and weeping. His companion sat and stared at the wall.

Though I had plenty of other things to think about, I went to the weeping man and did my best to calm him. This world, this death, couldn't last. God wouldn't let it. England would win the war, then everything would be fine again. He calmed down and grabbed my hand and held it and I felt self-conscious. After a while he whispered to me, "There isn't any decency left, is there? Men are worse than beasts, isn't it so?"

Then he smoked and said he wished he could leave for the

internment camp. Anything would be better. There would be air there, palliasses to lie on, and perhaps their families could visit them. His comrade said the same. I felt awful listening to those men looking upon an internment camp as salvation. And because I was well dressed and because self-control didn't desert me, I seemed to them of a world so much above their decent, humble, always-a-little-afraid, hard-working life, that they asked me to find out how long they would have to stay at the *Evêché*. With a little encouragement they would have asked me to pull wires on their behalf and obtain their release. Then I was called, and they stood at the door and with brilliant southern smiles wished me luck.

I was taken along later in a police car to see the men for whom I had been sorry. We picked up Van der Bock at a barracks, and I didn't enjoy sitting in the same car with him. We got to the military hospital. The secretary and Van der Bock went up. I stayed in the car with a surly faced detective. Young and unpleasant he was. Men, without arms, without legs, moved, or were moved, about the hospital grounds.

"You see, this is the result of war," he said to me reproachfully.

"You speak as if I were a German," I retorted.

"I know you're not a German, but you seem very fond of England."

Then he went on to say that General de Gaulle was a traitor. Paid by France's hereditary enemy, he tried to upset the Maréchal's plans for the welfare of France. "You really believe that?" I asked him. He said it was a fact, so to change the topic I asked what the actual charge was against me. "Complicity of treason," he answered.

I could have laughed. It was riotously funny. The end of it would be that they'd shoot me for it. To have worked against the Germans, to have got away from them in comfort and because I believed that France could be saved from the night of slavery, I was the associate of a traitor, the traitor being the man who was going to save France from it. It was too funny for words.

The secretary and Van der Bock returned and the secretary gave me an encouraging wink. I was elated. So the wounded hadn't let me down. Van der Bock got out at the barracks and as we drove on the secretary said that the wounded had told him that they had heard nothing. So the case was closed. I asked what time I could get out. In the morning, only, because I had to go before the *procureur* to have my release signed. I was not to worry, the *procureur* would not charge me; and now he would telephone Nona. She had been to see him in the morning. Well, I was not alone.

I passed a cheery night and when morning came I got my money

and tie back and the warder laughed and said I needed a shave. Then, with a large crowd that streamed out of all the cells, I was taken upstairs and was photographed. My finger-prints were taken, the lengths of my arms measured, my eyes specified, and I found out my arms were too short for my height. I didn't like the procedure, but it was explained that everyone who came to the *Evêché* must go through it. Then back to the cell and then to the Black Maria.

Outside, the Black Maria was waiting and I was bundled into a narrow steel cell, and it was locked and I didn't like it at all. A grilled hole let in a view of the street: the street was completely out of focus. I didn't know what to do with my legs: I was above the wheel. At the Palais de Justice we backed into the courtyard and with a lot of *gendarmes* about were marched into an underground cell where there was no light; only a stone bench and the latrine smelt badly. On the wall was a drawing of a naked woman. Perhaps it was Marguerite. The romantic heart of the first day of arrest must have given way to this more substantial wish. We were about thirty in that cell. It wasn't fit for ten.

At regular intervals gendarmes opened the door and took a prisoner out. If he didn't return you knew he was liberated; but most of them came back and they cursed the *juge d'instruction*, and for the first time I heard of the *Prison de Chaves*. It was hell, they assured me. Then my name was called. As I went out a gendarme put a chain round my wrist and began to drag me towards a corridor. "What's that for?" I asked. He thought I was trying to be funny, and said a few rude things. I was pulled into a room and the chain was taken off. A fairly tall man with a moustache sat at a desk and there was another man with a typewriter. They were A. Léon, *Juge d'Instruction* and his *greffier*. "Sit down," Léon said in a pleasant voice. I sat down. The gendarme was a large shadow behind me. "You're accused of a heinous offence," he said. "The secretary told me I would be let out," I said. "*Le Procureur de la République* takes a very different view of this." As I knew so little of French law, I asked him who that was. The *procureur*? He was the *juge d'instruction* in charge of my case, he said.

Because I'm not the only one who before coming into contact with the French judicial system ignores it completely, I had better explain how it works. When the police finish an investigation they send the prisoner over to the *Parquet*, which consists of the *procureur* (the local attorney general) and the *juges d'instruction* (magistrates). There is the *Petit Parquet* as well, but I never had anything to do with that. The responsibility of the police automatically ceases when the prisoner is handed over, hence they need not worry overmuch

at the time of the arrest. The *procureur* can release or, if he considers that there is a case against him, hand the prisoner over to a *juge d'instruction*. These judges either get their cases in rotation or, if they are specialists of a certain type of offence, then according to the nature of the case. For instance, A. Léon had been specially sent to Marseilles from the *Parquet Général* of Aix-en-Provence as a specialist of de Gaulle cases and other offences against the safety of Vichy. But he, like any other judge, dealt with other sorts of cases, too. The *juge d'instruction* has almost limitless power. He can, after the *instruction* (the investigation), issue a *non-lieu*, which means that the case has been dropped and innocence is completely established, or he can send the prisoner before a tribunal. Pending trial he can let the prisoner out on *liberté provisoire* (if he refuses this, appeal can be made to the *Chambre des Mises en Accusation* at the *Parquet Général*, but that is a risky process, for during the period of appeal the *instruction* is stopped and if temporary freedom is refused a month or so is lost into the bargain), or can detain him in prison till he personally decides that the investigation is finished and the prisoner may go for trial. If the prisoner is acquitted nobody reprimands the *juge*, who is responsible to no one. Moreover, the vile doctrine reigns in France that the longer the prisoner is detained the more pliable he will be when questioned. The *juge* is perhaps underpaid, can be shifted or dismissed, and is completely dependent on the administration, and, of course, on the party in power. If the charge is an offence that entails no more than five years' imprisonment, the prisoner goes before the *Tribunal Correctionel*; if it is more, then before the Assizes. To go to the Assizes means at least one year's detention without trial. I came to know of a case where a man waited five years for his trial. But for the *Correctionel* a year or so of waiting isn't extraordinary and the *juge d'instruction*, as I've said, has to render account to nobody for the time he took over the *instruction*.

Well, the *Code Napoléon* was created by a dictator and the petty little dictatorship of Vichy could use it well.

"I fully realize you aren't an ordinary criminal," Léon suavely said. "Even if you did say it, it isn't defamatory, though the law is going to hit you hard for it." "I didn't say it," I said, and I added, "Anyway, you can't keep me longer than the duration." He suavely smiled. "I want to help you," he said. "I'm going to confront you with the soldier and the wounded at the earliest possible date. I don't want to keep you longer than necessary. If you are innocent you will not be kept in prison. I shall summon you all for Wednesday." This was Saturday, 26th October.

"In the meantime?" I asked.

"You're going to *Chaves*. Don't forget this is a very serious charge."

Then I suggested there must surely be such a thing as bail in France and that I would willingly put it up myself. His answer was that the best thing was to take a lawyer and I should send my lawyer to see him. He asked if I could afford one. I said I could. In a kindly voice he asked if he could do anything for me. I said my wife was expecting me outside the *Evêché* and would he please ring up the hotel and let her know that I was going to prison. He promised to get in touch with her. The chain was round my wrist, and I returned to the cell and the stench of the latrine.

At the Palais de Justice you get no food. If you go there from prison you can take your daily bread ration with you; but if you come from the police you can go hungry. Now and then a kindly gendarme, for a tip of fifty francs, will go out and buy you a sandwich. But to be able to say no, and see a man suffer, is such a delightful thing that those whose work is attached to misery and despair often forego the fifty francs.

There was an elderly man with us in the cell. He looked like a churchwarden or a local alderman; the sort of man who in the world outside would wag his head at my way of living. A benign smile never left his face, and it was echoed in his heavy gold watch-chain. He was in for attempting to rape an eight-year-old girl. He went to the door, banged on it till a gendarme asked what he wanted. He had left some money in an open drawer at home and please could he go back and lock up the money? He wouldn't take more than an hour. The gendarme, under the illusion that this man was pulling his leg, hit him hard. He fell back into the cell. The gendarme didn't surprise me. The night before a drunken man had been brought in at the *Evêché*. He shrieked "Down with Hitler", and after that our peephole was closed from the outside. None the less, we carefully pushed it open and beheld the spectacle of French gendarmes and policemen beating the life out of a Frenchman for having shouted "Down with Hitler". The churchwarden sat and sobbed, and some of the old hands told him not to make *mauvais sang*. That is an expression that is very current in prison. Not to make bad blood is supposed to keep you fit and trim for the day you leave prison.

Then there is the *cafard* (blues) which attacks you. You have to smoke to chase the *cafard* away.

The door opened and a gendarme led me back to the judge.

Nona was there: she looked frightened. That swallowed most of her face. Only her eyes were among those present.

"Please don't worry," I said, "they must let me out when England wins the war."

"Don't speak English, *madame*," the judge said, and added, with a courteous smile, "if you can help it."

We spoke in the way of the quick and the dead. I asked her to go and see that Marseillais, perhaps he could pull wires: I had lived too long in France to visualize any other solution than wire-pulling. Nona asked about a lawyer and I gave her the name and address of a lawyer whom the Italians had recommended to me. He was a Corsican and besides being a lawyer was a P.P.F. political boss too. I took out six thousand francs and gave her five, keeping only a thousand. I had twenty pounds in my pocket which I had bought in Paris before leaving. I kept those. The judge then told me to return to the cell, and Nona, that if she didn't find the lawyer, this being Saturday, to come back and see him. I went to the cell. The gendarme, having now established I was what the Marseillais called a *rupin*, a man with money, volunteered to buy me cigarettes.

In the cell there was a German: a heavy German. He had been in the Foreign Legion and he and some other comrades had tried to get at the gold of the Banque de France as the gold was running from the enemy. He said he had nothing to do with it: he was innocent. He had been waiting for his trial the last three months. He was a ponderous fellow, full of *Gerechtigkeit* and professorial explanations for everything. He told me of *Chaves* and its stench. It was awful to face the idea and I couldn't even proudly say that I would see it through, for I had to see it through like any pick-pocket or raper of little children. Later on, when there was utter darkness in the cell, a gendarme called me out and asked if I wanted to speak to my wife. I said yes, and he took me to a door with iron bars that separated our world from the rooms of the *juges d'instruction*.

There was Nona. She looked happy.

"You'll be out in half an hour," she said. "How?" "You'll see." Then she told me that Pétain was meeting Hitler at Montoire. How proud of your leader you dead of Verdun must be! The gendarme said I would have to return to the cell. "In half an hour," Nona repeated. "I'll never eat *bouillabaisse* again," I said, "never."

The half-hour was up and another hour came and I resigned myself to my ludicrous fate. Nona had been too optimistic. Then it was eight o'clock and a gendarme was telephoning. "He's 'phoning the

chief warder of *Chaves*," said an Arab who was going there for the third time. "Reserving rooms for us," I said. A Marseillais overheard me. "You take it well," he said. I was. Inasmuch that I would willingly have given an eye, a leg and an arm not to have to go there. Two gendarmes came and we were marched out single file, and back I was in the Black Maria, or in prison slang, in the *panier à salade*.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE *panier* waited for some time after we came to a halt. Later the doors of its cells were unlocked and mine was unlocked, too. There were walls on both sides and we were led into a large round hall with a sort of concierge box in the middle. Men wearing dark uniforms shouted at us to hurry. Wherever you looked there were bars, and doors with bars and corridors, and above you more bars and balconies with bars. And now the process of stripping us of everything Christ had died for began. We were screamed at and shouted at; we were pushed about and more shouting followed; we had to undress naked on the cold stones. Then we had to take everything from our pockets and throw it on the floor: money, watches, and whatever our pockets contained. A lot of shouting and swearing and humorous remarks accompanied the undressing: a young pickpocket was slow, the warder fetched him one; another warder recognized an old client and they chatted affably. I had put the twenty pounds into an envelope and I put the envelope into my passport beside some other papers. When the search reached me they didn't bother much with papers, being practically illiterate men, and tossed the passport with the envelope back to me. Then my money was counted and I was told I would get a receipt for it next day. My garments were examined and tossed back one by one. Then I dressed, but between undressing and dressing something distinctly had been lost. I'm still looking for it.

We were marched to the right and beside a grilled door a prison orderly, a prisoner himself, gave us *gamelles* with bean soup in them: the beans were of the variety fed to pigs in normal times. I couldn't eat. The prison orderly recognized a pal in our bunch; there was much talk—of not making bad blood—the case couldn't hold—

who was your lawyer?—what connections did you have?—I'll try to get you the same job as mine, you get more food.

Seven of us were shoved into a small cell. A negro was sleeping there; he had white hair. Four palliasses were provided for the seven of us, and we lay crammed in the evil stench. The young man who wanted to court the policeman off duty lay on my right: I told him I wasn't a policeman and he would get my shoe across his head if he thought so. He said he didn't want the shoe, he didn't want policemen off duty or on duty; all he wanted was to get out. In the middle of the cell was a tin can. That was the cell's latrine. It was emptied once a day. But I slept and when morning came I didn't marvel where I was. I knew that before I awoke.

First we went to have a bath. In an incredibly cold and dirty room steaming water was showered on us and four men had to make do with one towel. The anthropometry followed: a gruff old Corsican warder took my measurements and discovered lots of scars on me. A cigarette stub had years ago slightly burnt my right hand; that was measured and entered into a book. A boy couldn't remember the date of birth of his mother: the warder hit him on the head—he straightway remembered it. When that show was over we went to the desk, where all our particulars were taken. A young man with a pleasant face put the questions so politely that I looked at him, and wasn't surprised that he didn't wear a tie. Married? Yes, married. Could my wife visit me? Yes, once a week, provided the *juge d'instruction* gave the permission. Who was my *juge d'instruction*? Léon. Bad luck, the man was a swine. But he could be nice. I'll find out by and by. Get away you, stop whispering. We went down into the round hall, and there a tall prisoner said, so I was the man who shouted "*Vive de Gaulle*"? I was quite right. Then I was taken to my permanent cell.

It was cell No. 8 of the Third Division. Three men were in it and some sunshine got through the bars; but the light wasn't the light I used to know. Were the thickness of the walls or the bars or the high window responsible for it? I do not know, but it was a different light with no life to it: prison light. The men were pale: prison pallor. I didn't escape it, either. One of them spoke to me in English. He was born in Marseilles, of English parents, was a merchant and imprisoned for having bought stolen goods. His story came in torrents. He bought the goods from an old-established firm and then when he was selling them it turned out they were stolen. How could he know they were stolen? True, he lamented, since the Armistice all sense of decency had left business life. But how could he know? He asked that day and night. I suppose he

couldn't know. He was a large fellow and must have had rosy cheeks. He was a widower with three children. He wept copiously whenever his children were mentioned, or on Sundays when they came to see him in the *parloir*. But weeping was fashionable in *Chaves*. I didn't weep; however I remained an outsider. He envied me for being in prison for England and de Gaulle.

The second occupant of the cell was a young boy of the Vieux Port and every sentence of his either started with *pardi* or *pardi* was the sentence itself. His case was more thrilling. He had killed a man in self-defence, killed him with the man's revolver, and emptied the whole magazine into him: six shots. His defence was he didn't know at the moment what he was doing. He was so frightened, the innocent little boy.

"But," I said, "you could say that if you had only fired one shot. But six?" He had thirty-four witnesses, all from the Vieux Port, to prove he did it in self-defence. Léon was in charge of his case. He was a calm boy and kept to himself. He knew a lot about prison routine. He hadn't been before to *Chaves*, though he had a reformatory to his credit. His brother had spent a few months there, his sister had just been released from prison: she had killed a man in self-defence, too. "It's either five years at the Assizes for me," the boy said, "or a *non-lieu*."

The third occupant of the cell used to be a sergeant-major in the Foreign Legion. He was in because some swine had stolen his pension book and had gone round France cashing the coupons and cheating the State of two hundred thousand francs. At night he took off his artificial leg (amputated legs never seemed to leave me), and Jack the Englishman and I put the leg under our palliasses, and it acted as a joint pillow for us.

The cell was very clean; that was Jack's merit. I learned it was a posh cell. It was a *quartier cellulaire*. In normal times only great criminals had the privilege of being in it. It had a latrine with running water; a luxury indeed after the tin can. That day I was handed a telegram from Nona telling me to appoint such and such a lawyer. But Jack had persuaded me to write to his lawyer.

We discussed our cases. Apparently there reigns the habit in prisons that you tell your case and the other chaps are the devil's advocate, and you learn to answer with verve and seeming truthfulness questions the judge will never put to you. But it's an exhilarating experience, and by the time Wednesday came I was certain the judge would release me.

The previous night Jack, who slept half an inch from me, had not only snored, but put his head on to my palliasse to give me, I

figure, full value. I nudged him, he woke up and he called me names and I called him names and we nearly had a fight. At last I dozed off, whereupon he woke me up and then I called him names and we nearly had a fight again. The sergeant-major sat up the whole night smoking a lot, and evidently making a lot of bad blood. Though he was more innocent than an angel in Heaven, he expected to be kept in prison till his impersonator was found. It would have been rather bad for him if it had turned out that he had been impersonating himself all the time. I didn't think of that. I believed everything I was told; and I believed plenty. The sergeant-major's second trouble was that since his arrest he had received no news of his wife. He didn't seem to trust her. She had all his money and he shivered at the notion that she might have gone off with it. When Nona's telegram arrived and I said it was from my wife, he burst into yellow tears of jealousy. So, quarrelling and watching the sergeant-major producing gallons and gallons of bad blood, the night passed.

There was a clock somewhere in prison and it chimed every hour: you counted the chimes; now and then you argued violently whether it had chimed four or five. As if that mattered.

A new trip in the Black Maria and in the cell at the Palais de Justice I spent the entire day waiting. Once, towards five in the afternoon, I banged on the door and when the gendarme came I asked if I could go to the tap, for I was very thirsty. The gendarme pushed me back and banged the door on me, calling me all the manure in the world; he also advised me to die of thirst. Some old lags—barrack-room lawyers in the prison sense—said I had a right to drink. I knew by then what I could do with my rights in a Vichy-run prison. Eat them. As nourishing as the food we got. Towards seven in the evening I was taken to Léon. I didn't mind the chain; in the morning I had been handcuffed. Then I blushed. The soldier Van der Bock and the three wounded were sitting in a cloud of smoke. They looked at ease, and as the door closed behind me, Léon, in a voice I had never heard the previous time, shouted at me to sit down.

Before him was the press-cutting the police had confiscated from Nona when they searched her room in the hotel. That was the day before. I had been taken from my cell and driven in a police car to the *Evêché*. I waited in a room upstairs, then the *commissaire spécial* and some detectives got into the car with me and we drove off. I asked where we were going, and nobody answered me. Then I saw we were on the Canebière and the car stopped in front of Nona's hotel. They went upstairs with me and they walked into

her room, and there on the bed sat Nona. Since she had no photograph of me, on the night table lay a cutting from *John o' London's Weekly*, with a picture of the successful novelist and his dog, brought by her from Paris. The police had a search warrant and they took the press-cutting and Nona's addresss book, though I loudly protested it was her property. Nona asked the *commissaire* to let me have something to eat. He consented, and the waitress rushed down and brought a large sandwich, which, of course, I couldn't eat. Now the cutting lay before Léon, and since it was upside down for me, I watched Dodo's head, which naturally was upside down too.*

"Sergeant Van der Bock," Léon said, "has made a very explicit and convincing statement." He was a different man. I asked where my lawyer was. Léon said he hadn't turned up. That was true, for when he had telephoned Léon answered that my case wasn't coming up yet. But that I only found out next day. From his voice and the inimical atmosphere, I gathered I wouldn't be released. Anyway, I decided to fight for it.

He read Van der Bock's statement. I had sought him out in the pub, forced drinks on him, praised the English and said they would win the war, spoken disparagingly of the Germans, and told him an English plane had written the word *confiance* on the sky of Paris.

"Is that a crime, too?" I asked. "Arrest the R.A.F. for it, but not me."

"Don't interrupt me," Léon thundered.

I remembered what the advocates of the devil had told me, and said I'd better wait till my lawyer was present. Léon said I had that right and he would adjourn for three weeks. Three weeks! I said let's carry on. The enumeration of my sins went on. I tried to persuade Van der Bock to desert and go to Casablanca, thence to join the English and was ready to put up the money with which to bribe French seamen. I praised the two traitors. He followed me in the street and saw me go into several bars, speaking to soldiers. What had I to say for myself?

I started off. I said the evidence of a beggar wasn't trustworthy. The man had admitted he asked, and took ten francs from me. "At the police-station," Van der Bock said, "I separated his ten francs from my money and wanted to give it back to him." "But he didn't," I said. Then I reminded him he wanted to find out from me how to get to England. "The sergeant admits that," Léon said. "He naturally wanted to find out more about a man who justly roused

* See frontispiece.

his suspicion, so he played the part of the sympathizer." "A perfect explanation," I said. "I'll go and break into somebody's house, steal the family plate, and then say I had suspicions and wanted to find out more." "This isn't the way to speak here," Léon said. "You'll learn respect before we're through with you."

The next point. I said England would win the war. France wasn't at war with England: they had been allies. Speaking disparagingly of the Germans: France was still at war with Germany, no peace treaty had been signed by de Gaulle and Muselier. He only had Van der Bock's word for it: the word of the man who begged ten francs. First he reported that I said that to all of them, then I forced him to change it and confess I said it only to him and in English. Why? "When I said to us, I meant the company at the table," Van der Bock answered. "A very reasonable answer," Léon said.

I went on. Even if I said it in English, de Gaulle and Muselier were French names. The wounded were sitting near, they would have heard those French names, especially as those names were pretty well known. I turned to them: did they hear those two names? By then I was aware that those simple peasants were frightened out of their wits that they might get into trouble for having accepted twenty francs from de Gaulle's agent, and might, which was too terrible for words, have to return the money. So they doggedly said they never heard a word.

"There you are," I triumphantly said. Léon brushed it aside, but I got the *greffier* to put it down. Van der Bock had one more thing to say. He asked Léon to put down that I had stood him a whisky-and-soda—a monstrously expensive drink—which clearly showed that I wanted to incite him to sedition.

"My way of thinking—blame my upbringing for it—doesn't allow me to offer a glass of water when I'm drinking whisky," I answered.

Then it was over. The wounded inquired why I didn't explain that I was the traitors' henchman: they wouldn't have taken the money had I done so.

I turned to Léon. "What's going to happen?" "You'll stay in prison till I send you before the tribunal, and the tribunal will decide whether Sergeant Van der Bock or you should be believed."

That night Jack said he objected to people smoking when he wanted to sleep: I said he should get himself rooms at the Ritz. We nearly came to blows. Then we agreed that Léon's change-over was rather fishy. There was now nothing else left but to settle down to the routine of *Chaves*.

. . . . .

Seven was the hour of reveille. We waited a little, then were marched down into the courtyard. Each division had a courtyard allotted to it. The courtyard had high walls to keep the sun out, and the courtyard itself was divided up by walls of the same height. Each floor went into one of those open-air cells. In each of those sections seventy or eighty men had to move about; as a matter of fact, we just stood and gossiped. On the stairs leading to the prison stood a warder and watched us. Some warders let us cross into other sections to see friends; some didn't. If you were clever, you managed to go from section to section: I wasn't clever. We were supposed to be out for twenty minutes, but very often the warder got bored and we were sent back after ten minutes. If it rained we were kept indoors. After returning to the cell we cleaned it, and towards nine the first meal arrived. A *gameleur* (prison orderly) stopped outside the door, it was opened and he handed in our daily ration of dark bread and a plate of soup. The soup consisted of a few carrots and turnips, but there was nothing substantial to it. It was just boiled water and usually it was quite cold. Then the door was locked and we settled down. The clock chimed, but, anyway, a partitioned sunbeam showed on the wall that time was passing.

At half-past two back into the crowded courtyard and more small talk. The warder brought the post and shouted out the names. Letters were never fresh. When a letter arrived at the prison it was sent to the Palais de Justice and the *juge d'instruction* in charge of your case censored it at his leisure. Then it was sent back to theprison and the prison censored it, too, and only then it was handed over. On the average, a letter took no longer than six days. Now and then I got letters from Nona that took a fortnight in coming. The same rule applied to outgoing letters. After the twenty minutes were over, provided the warder observed them, you returned to your cell. That was the hardest moment. You knew the day was over and nothing had happened to help you, and if there were no letters you made a lot of bad blood and smoked to keep the *cafard* away.

At four-thirty came the evening soup. On Tuesdays and Fridays, rice soup: the rice was full of worms and those days I went without the evening meal. Wednesdays and Saturdays, beans: we looked forward to beans. Mondays and Thursdays, lentil soup: we loved that too. On Sundays, in the morning, we were supposed to have meat, but that was usually stolen by the staff or the prisoners the staff employed and worked hand-in-glove with it. When there was meat you felt like wanting to become a vegetarian. Generally speaking, I wasn't hungry.

Jack used to get food parcels sent in by his family and he shared

the food with us. In that cell real comradeship existed, despite the rows, and Jack and I, the new-comers, took the adage of honour among thieves very seriously.

At half-past five we undressed, the door was opened and we had to put everything outside, keeping our underwear only. Then the door was locked and at six o'clock lights out. We lay on the palliasse, with the stone floor very close, till seven in the morning in complete darkness.

We talked, and Jack would tell us he seduced at least three women a day; it was his sort of lying. In prison they all lie; probably I lied too. Outside, the prison dog was free to roam anywhere and take your garments for kerbstones; they used to be wet in the morning. He had an endless supply, that dog.

My mates fell asleep towards eight. I waited till the clock struck ten, and then tried to sleep, too. In the beginning it was difficult, later I became a good sleeper. At times I dozed in the day, too. It was the result of that slowing down of life, of thought, of the death of initiative and of dreams being more important and much more vivid than reality. The bars and thick walls put outside life out of focus. Jack really believed he was a lady-killer; I for one was well-nigh in England.

There were plenty of books to read. A French midshipman, who was in for getting his discharge money twice and for wearing decorations he wasn't entitled to, had collected books from God knows where, and lent them for two cigarettes a time. Balzac, Guy de Maupassant and Henri de Montherlant kept me good company. Nona sent in some books, too. Cigarettes were plentiful. The prison had a canteen and the prisoner who acted as canteen orderly came round three times a week and took your orders, delivery the following day. Of course, a lot of cheating and embezzling went on. The old hands knew that and they had every week a hundred or so francs sent in, so that they should be able to control their accounts. Jack and I were mercilessly robbed. The chief accountant of the prison was a Paris banker, who boasted he had embezzled twenty million francs.

The canteen sold cigarettes, wine (three bottles a week), and now and then sausage and cheese. The cigarettes, *Gauloises Bleues*, were the prison money. You couldn't keep any money on you, so you tipped and bribed with cigarettes. Clean sheets were two packets of cigarettes. The *gamelcur* got two packets of cigarettes a week to put a lot of beans and lentils into your soup—a sound arrangement which suited both parties. During our walks I met most of my fellow prisoners of the Third Division.

My first question after entering *Chaves* was whether there were any Englishmen in the prison. I was informed that there were three, and I met them on my first walk. They had been captured by the Germans in Belgium, had escaped, and without speaking a word of Flemish or French, got safely to Marseilles, being helped throughout their trip by the French, who hid them, clothed them and gave them money. In Marseilles they were interned at the *Fort Saint-Jean* with a number of other English who got through. When the American Consul gave them their first pay, they went on the booze, got drunk and went in for shoplifting. They were caught red-handed, laden with pipes, braces and tobacco-pouches. One was a Highlander, I rather liked him: the second, a whining rat from Essex; the third, a Dutch boy who helped them to escape and guided them to Marseilles, saying he was English because he thus hoped to get to England and join the Dutch Navy. They were given two months because their story didn't hold. The judge asked them why their drunken lark had resulted in systematic wholesale pinching? After they had served their sentence and got out, the rat had a row with the Dutch boy and gave him up to the French—his thanks for having been saved from the Hun. But, as I say, the Scotsman was a nice chap, and we used to make plans how to get to England once we were both out. He had a wife and four daughters in Scotland, and a letter came through in which his wife said that she was mighty proud of her brave and valiant husband. "I hope she never finds out about those sixteen pouches," he piously said.

There was a charming fellow who was serving a life-sentence. He took it well. The prison was decidedly pro-English, for the majority of the prisoners believed that if the English landed they would all be released at once: they seriously believed that. Instead of saying, 'I wish I were free,' they said, 'when is England going to win?' The charming fellow with the life-sentence had had a university education and I could talk to him on any old subject. He was immensely popular. Once I asked him how could a man with his brains and education believe in the English letting loose every criminal. He smiled and said, "I've no illusions. But when the English land there's going to be confusion. I only want twenty-four hours of it. That's all."

His smile broadened, and I thought that twenty-four hours wouldn't be of much use to him: he already had eight years behind him. Supposing he did escape, the police would find him weary and probably already asleep in the nearest *bistro*, and if he were honest with himself he would have to admit to not being so displeased to be behind bars again and to return to the well-known routine. I

was experiencing that in a small way. I asked him, albeit it was strictly against prison etiquette, the story of his different sentences. He started to enumerate them, then he said, "Let me see. The seventh? Oh, yes, that was for begging." "Begging?" "Well, armed begging."

He was at *Chaves*, a detention prison, because he had asked for a re-trial. He hoped to have his sentence reduced to fifteen years, and if it failed at any rate he was having a few months in a prison where smoking was allowed. The sentenced man tries every possible dodge to get back into a detention prison where he needn't work and, most important of all, is allowed to smoke. The usual trick is that a friend outside denounces him for an offence he never has committed and the *instruction* opens and he is returned or generally kept on in the detention prison. And there he hoped that England and General de Gaulle would come to his rescue.

There was a gunman with ten years to go who led me into the corner of the courtyard and spoke as follows:

"When you get to England you're surely going to see General de Gaulle, since you are suffering for your loyalty to him. Ask him, and he can't refuse you, that when he comes here he will give us an amnesty. I'm a great partisan of his." The next day he gave me a slip of paper with his name on it, in case I forgot.

The prisoners for sexual offences formed a select band of their own: they kept away from the rest of us. More often than not they got off quite lightly, the *sursis* smiled on them. The *sursis*: that word was around me from soup to soup. The *sursis*, or correctly *la loi Bérenger*, was the equivalent of being bound over in England. In France you were bound over for five years. That meant that if, let's say, a man got six months with the *sursis*, then if he offended again within five years he not only paid for his new offence but had to stay in prison for an additional six months. Hence a year or eighteen months with the *sursis* didn't make them happy. They preferred six months straight: with that they knew at least where they were. Their explanation was that the police tried to get the man who left prison with the *sursis*. Very possible; but it was a fact, too, that most of them knew that sooner or later they would be in deep water again. Of repentance and pangs of conscience I saw naught. If they suffered from remorse it was because they had been fools for not having got away with their particular type of job. The majority were in for petty offences, but to hear them speak you would imagine they had robbed the Bank of England, with the Banque de France thrown in as an afterthought. A young boy who had stolen fifty francs from the till of his boss said he was in for

having held up someone and taken fifty thousand francs: I believed him. He told me a cock-and-bull story: I believed it.

Actually, I did meet a man who robbed the Banque de France. About a fortnight after I left Nona and the world behind me, the rumour spread in the prison that Mela, the famous Corsican bandit, had arrived. Mela, with some friends, had attacked an armoured train that was transporting bullion to be shipped to America. That was four or five years ago, and they had got away with it: I think the loot was over sixty million francs. The job went off without a hitch, but in the traditional manner one of them squealed and they were caught; Mela got twelve years at the Assizes. He had been detained previously for two years. Now he came to *Chaves* because he was accused of having killed two gendarmes at home in Corsica. He hotly denied it. I hope he had killed them.

He was respected by the warders—he was a man in their eyes—anyway they had to mind their p's and q's because his friends outside would have given them hell. The prison was aglow with excitement when he arrived. He had been there three days when I asked Jack to point him out to me. "But you've been talking to him this morning," Jack said. "You don't mean that nice quiet little man who looks like a country doctor?"

He was the quiet little man. He had calm benign blue eyes, modest manners and was full of kindness. He had eight years to go, and it was funny to hear him tell me not to make bad blood, to cheer up, for soon I would be out. We were friends.

My greatest friend was Mathieu. He was a gangster, too.

The boy who had emptied the whole chamber into another man in self-defence got his *non-lieu* from Léon, who so assiduously was keeping me in jail. The key made much noise as the door was unlocked and the warder shouted, "Take your belongings." "I've got it," the boy calmly said, engraved his name on the wall and went into freedom.

The sergeant-major was removed to the prison of Nice pending his trial. I missed his leg. So Jack and I were left alone in the cell. We didn't quarrel because we were alone. Like a mill that never tires of the water so we discussed our respective cases and that went on for two days. The third day, towards noon, a short, dark fellow made his entrance into the cell. He was the proud possessor of a charming smile and was well dressed in the flamboyant manner that is the trade-mark of the whoremonger, the pimp and the hold-up man of Marseilles.

The new-comer conformed to a certain code of behaviour—by

new-comer I mean the returning professional. He came in, said *bonjour*, sat down on the only chair, sighed, took out a packet of cigarettes, usually *Gitanes Jaunes*, offered one to all present; that was a fine gesture, for from past experience he knew that only *Gauloises Bleues* were available in prison. Then he sighed again, and you asked him how many days he had spent at the *Evêché*. Between two and four; they had beaten him hard. You weren't surprised at that. A little before I was arrested a man had been beaten so hard by the police that he died after his arrival in *Chaves*. That was a silly mistake of the police. Their custom was, when such an accident happened, to put a rope round the man's neck and hang him in his cell. That was suicide at its best. Well, he had been beaten but they got nothing out of him. That was a lie. The professional crook talks after a little beating. But you were polite and nodded eagerly: it had been the same in your case, your nod implied. Since you squealed and gave away your chums it was the least you could do. Then, finally, you asked him why he was in. There were two answers. The serious professional—the Wimbledon player who doesn't underestimate his opponent—would say it was a very serious affair. Then you'd ask why? The ice thus broken, a long lie would emerge, the truth not even by mistake. But the less serious ones inevitably said, "*Je n'y suis pour rien.*" That phrase became as much my companion as the twilight and the stink of the tin cans. He added in a vivacious voice that nowadays you got arrested for a *oui* or a *non*. He was right about that. Roughly speaking, seventy per cent of the prisoners got off. Of the entry of sordid amateurs like myself it's not worth while to speak.

But Mathieu was above all that. He was the only romantic criminal I knew. He had *panache*. He became my friend and because in his own way he was one hundred per cent genuine I made the mistake of considering the others like that, too. He came in and said "*Enchanté*," which in itself showed he wasn't a Babbit of prisons. He was in for a negligible affair, the stealing of an army lorry, and it was a matter of days for him to prove an alibi and get out. But he didn't like being in; none of them like that. It remained a standing surprise for me how little they liked it, how badly they stood it. I, the meek amateur, stood it better. Yet going to prison wasn't my job in life: it was theirs. To go to prison if a coup didn't succeed was, or should have been, the same as for me to write a book that is a flop. But I repeat, they didn't like it, they didn't like paying, as the saying went, and they wept a lot. That seemed deplorable to me, for with all the leisure and luxury a criminal life gave them surely a little payment should now and again be taken as a matter of

course. But they got hysterical. Though fully prepared not to give up their easy job they broke down even if it was a matter of being only a few months away from the flesh-pots of crookedness. In that respect Mathieu wasn't an exception either. He was impressed by my being in prison for something in which there was no gain and for which there was no compensation. I became for him quite a mythical figure, and if he had had the Garter, or at least the Order of Chastity (Third Class) near at hand he would have decorated me with it. And because he only learnt to write and read in the Central prison of Nimes at the age of twenty, he thought it was a fine thing to be an author. He was so serious about it that when my turn came to scrub the floor of the cell he told me he knew how to scrub whereas I knew how to write, and he did it for me every time. He taught me a lot, too. The first night, with Jack's snores as an all-embracing background, he told me the story of his life. He made no excuses for it and didn't sentimentalize himself; for me it was a revelation.

He was born of a Corsican mother and Italian father, and he didn't meet his father till he was six years old. His father had been away in prison. They lived in the Vieux Port, where crime is as rampant as the lack of sewers. He got his first job at the age of seven. He became a boot-black. At ten, he went to a reformatory for having stolen oranges: that was the beginning. When he returned from prison his mother wasn't at home: she had shot a man. Later, however, she was acquitted. His first coup was trying to lift the bag of a Japanese skipper who was taking his crew's wages to the ship. They were three boys who made the attempt, and though armed with revolvers their attack miscarried. The Jap was too quick with his ju-jitsu tricks and they were only tyros: the police got them. Once in *Chaves* they arranged that Mathieu would take it all on himself; that's an age-old custom. When arrested they squeal, lose their heads and get themselves deeper into the mess by trying to incriminate each other. But after the police beatings comes the calm of *Chaves* and then such business arrangements are worked out. I saw many. The idea being that those who are set free help the martyr by sending him money and food, bribing warders and finding him a nice cushy sum of money when he gets out; and most important of all, they look after his family. So Mathieu was the only culprit and was sentenced to two years in Nimes. The evening his associates were released they shouted in through the peephole that he needn't worry, they would look after his mother and would send him money. They did nothing of the sort. His mother had to beg and steal to keep herself alive.

"What did you do to them when you came out?" I asked. It was black in the cell and the cold floor was but a few straws away from me.

"I suppose they died in some war or other," Mathieu answered. Since I was reasonably expecting to end up in Nimes, too, he gave me details of that most notorious of French prisons. It was a gruesome story he told me. Lice hanging on the wires that surround your palliasse like heavy grapes in the south in the autumn; beating and beating; the warders, in his time, rather fancied hitting you with an iron rod. "You pray a lot," Mathieu said. Then the *cachot*, the field punishment number one of prisons. You lay naked on the stone floor, in the day-time you had to run round the yard with a load of stones on your back. Before evening you weren't given rest. Dry bread was the only nourishment.

"You can't escape the *cachot*," he said. "If you're on your best behaviour the warders get irritated and nag you till you lose your temper. Then they get you."

I wished from the bottom of my heart that people didn't lose legs. "When you come out of the *cachot*," Mathieu went on, "and you're back on your lousy palliasse, you thank the Virgin and you're happy." There was silence and we counted the chimes. Nine. Ten more hours of darkness. "You're a writer. Put this into one of your books." "I shall," I said. "I'll put you in, too." He liked that.

When he came out of Nimes he became a seaman, another Marseilles profession. That meant smuggling dope. He got caught, and though the sentence wasn't stiff, he got ten years of the *trique*. *Trique* is *interdiction de séjour*, which means that for the allotted time you're not allowed into any town of more than sixty thousand inhabitants. (I'm not sure of the number; it's round sixty thousand, that I know.) For the man living upon his wits it's the equivalent of starvation. He prefers two years' imprisonment to three years of the *trique*. The idea, probably, is to keep him out of mischief and to force him to earn his living honestly. The practical result is that in the utter despair of boredom he either creates an opportunity for crooked dealing and crime, hence you read in papers of sordid murders in wayside towns, or returns in secret to Marseilles. The whole point is that you can teach nothing to a fish out of water. So Mathieu served four sentences of six months each for being caught in Marseilles. When the ten years were up he went in for the usual Marseilles racket—women, protecting, cards and the municipal racket. The underworld of Marseilles either belonged to the Communists or the P.P.F. The latter was Mathieu's party and it was his job to bring over two streets at the elections: every

week he doled out certain sums among the inhabitants of those streets, He was a member of the storm-troopers of the party, too. Once he got nearly killed when the storm-troops raided a brothel whose proprietress had incurred the party's displeasure, but its political and graft opponents had turned it into a stronghold and much shooting took place. However, it all ended up well, and the brothel continued to pay rent to the party of Doriot. Others told me he had been seen many times in the famous red car of the party. That car, armed with a machine-gun, used to take part in the P.P.F.—Communist fights—a very interesting sidelight on the inner workings of the Third Republic. When he or any other of his comrades went to prison they knew the party would get going and with its connections among the procurers and judges—every party had these—would get them out. Needless to add that the head of the party was one of the men who now in Paris was shaping the new order hand-in-hand with Abetz.

Mathieu was pro-English. His attachment to the party was a matter of money and of receiving protection.

Then he had married. His wife was a simple Italian woman of straight and honest life. They had three little daughters and he adored them. He was going straight, he said. This, naturally, had a different meaning to him than to most of us. Now he slipped up over the little lorry business. In my naïve way I asked him if the hell of prison wasn't a deterrent to him. He said it made him into a bigger crook, for once out you didn't care a damn. I came to understand that. We're all of us lavish with time; in retrospect of course. But for the world in general the important thing about a crook is just when prison for him belongs to the past. I spent nights and nights thinking of prisons and the whole idea of crime and punishment. I didn't find a better alternative but I realized one thing: that sentencing a man to one year or eighteen months, or two years or three years, is a farce; it means nothing to you in the long run. The first three weeks are terrible, that and the last week remain with you; but between the two there's just a blur. The wheel of routine and of lost vitality turns you round and round, and because you get a kind of vertigo your mental eyes are closed and only the blur remains. Between the first and the last days nothing matters. Moreover, the professional crook finds himself in prison among men of his class and profession; it's almost like being in a club, a badly run club, but a club all the same.

I discussed my case with Mathieu. He thought I would either get out or get a stiff sentence. He offered to have Van der Bock bumped off, but I said 'No, I'll find him after the war.' In Marseilles

they bump off people for you for a trifle; it's within the reach of every purse.

My case was a faithful companion; it didn't desert me for a moment. The day after the confrontation, Jack's lawyer came and I didn't think much of him. He was an elderly man, full of good will, and he smelt of red wine. He thought my chances were good: perhaps six months, or less, or even the *sursis*. He was twirling his fat moustache and when I told him that a fellow prisoner got eighteen months for having looked up from his paper in a café and said '*Pauvre France*,' he said that was possible, too. My biggest grouse was that he came but seldom. The principal reason for having a lawyer in prison is the contact with the outer world and the distraction of being called down, of waiting outside the lawyers' room, the talk; then the importance you have in the eyes of your cell mates as you come back. What did he say? What's happening outside? Is Wavell still advancing? Has Berlin been bombed again? You answer them at your leisure. Some lawyers understood that, hence the most popular lawyers of Marseilles were those who came twice or thrice a week. But the old gentleman whom I had engaged was above that; he was above knowing the law, too. Later I found out he was a good commercial lawyer. He never quite knew what was the charge against me. He thought all along that it would be Acts Against the Security of the State of Vichy.

Like a common or garden bombshell, he imparted the news in the middle of November that the *procureur* had decided that my case was too serious for the *correctionel*, and had sent it on to the military authorities. That meant, if the military tribunal took over the charge, I would be transferred to the *Fort Saint-Nicolas* and await my trial there. In the courtyard there was a lot of shaking of heads and of commiserating pats on my shoulder. At least five years the verdict was, the military tribunal wasn't mean or stingy with time. Meanwhile, the prison life was tunnelling like a worm into me. Without noticing it, I was becoming part and parcel of it.

It hurt my pride that I who had escaped much more serious consequences in Paris should have come a cropper so easily. It was futile, ridiculous business. But because that crescendo was still mounting it seemed to me that at any rate I had shown in black and white, so to speak, that in this utter darkness I was loyal to England and to de Gaulle who symbolized the real France, and that it would stand on record that in the month of October 1940 there was at least one man who wasn't afraid of turning against the rising, powerful tide. Then I shrugged my shoulders, for it had been a silly little affair, a rodomontade, moonshine. The military authori-

ties were slow in taking a decision. The lawyer came one day with the suggestion that as I was a Hungarian I should write to the Hungarian Minister in Vichy asking him to bring my letter to the *Maréchal's* notice. In that letter I should explain that it was preposterous to bring such a charge against a neutral who had nothing to do with this war, and I could stress that I thought a lot of Pétain and his rule. In fine, they should let me out. The lawyer considered that a sound idea.

Now it happens that I've but very few principles, and because they're so few I can't be lavish with them: I'm a pauper at the feast of principles. The plutocrat of principles can easily give up his principle of not playing cards on a Sunday since there remain the rest of them, like not voting for the Liberal Party, disliking dagoes on principle and not marrying a divorced woman. But for me to give up even one of those very few would be disaster. So I thanked the lawyer for his sound advice, grinned at the yellow old woman and said I preferred five years.

Nona could not obtain a permit from Léon to come and see me. The lawyer tried to intervene but Léon contended I was a dangerous person, hence he couldn't let me communicate with the outer world through her. That appeared rather hard on me. There were murderers whose wives came to see them; perhaps they were less dangerous. But something was fishy. As I've said, letters were carefully censored, yet one afternoon came the chief warder into my cell and in the name of Léon confiscated all the letters Nona had written me and which, naturally, had been censored before. Even the oldest lags couldn't remember a precedent. Nona had written 'just hold on, once you're out somebody will get it in the neck,' shortly before the letters were seized. Our correspondence was like flashes at sea. I had said if I got a stiff sentence there was nothing else left for her but to return to America: she had answered she would wait if it lasted a million years. That sounded a lot.

People came and people went. Jack got his *liberté provisoire* at the beginning of December. We parted the best of friends. Mathieu went, too. Among the new-comers in the cell was a French staff officer with whom I used to talk late into the night. It was always about the downfall of France. He knew Laval. He enumerated at length the different crooked dealings of his; there were reels and reels of them. He knew Darlan, too. "Laval," he said, "is an astute fox of Auvergne; but Darlan is just ambitious. Now that Laval has been sacked and Darlan is in power the danger

is more acute. Laval played his own game, but Darlan will play anybody else's game as long as it seems to suit his ambition."

"You must hate France after the way you've been treated," he said one night.

"No," I said. "I wouldn't call the men who got me here Frenchmen."

Even in the filth of prison there were real Frenchmen: a case in point was a young man, hardly twenty. He had been evacuated with his unit from Dunkerque and had passed through England before going up to the Somme. He wore a battledress blouse. He had helped more than two hundred of his comrades to get to Syria, whence they could cross over to the English. He was now in serious trouble. He had made out their demobilization papers for Beyrouth. So, first, he was being tried by the civilian authorities for forgery and then would be handed over to the military authorities for helping men to desert. I knew his story inside out. He was shielding an important person who ran the show; that person didn't bother to send him a few coppers for cigarettes. The boy was always in good cheer, and though he had no money he didn't scrounge like the rest of them. Once I brought him some oranges into the courtyard and he blushed scarlet when I gave them to him. I used to tell him he shouldn't forget we were backing the winner, he should think of the blitzed people of London and that, in comparison, we were better off. That was a flagrant lie, for it's better to be free and dead than to be imprisoned—and dead, too. For forgery he got a sentence of eighteen months and he blushed and smiled when I gave him a packet of cigarettes, and then one morning he was taken away. But before going he managed to get a chit smuggled to me with the address of one of his friends whom I promised to look up if I got out before him. The chit ended with *Vive l'Angleterre, Vive le Général de Gaulle.* I felt very small in comparison to him.

A striking proof of the sympathies of the prison came at the end of November when Jack and Mathieu were yet with us. It was after ten at night that the sirens went off. The warders put out the lights in the corridors, ascertained the doors were safely bolted and then scampered off to the nearest shelter. Three bombs were dropped on Marseilles. We all thought the R.A.F. had dropped them. It affected each of us differently. Mathieu, the gunman, got hysterical with fright and tried to hide under his palliasse. Jack was terribly nervous about his children and caught Mathieu's hysteria, and when I said I hoped the English would blow Marseilles off the map I nearly

got lynched by them. But next morning, in the courtyard, I only saw smiling faces, and they rubbed their hands and said at last the English had started. They hoped that many more raids would follow. The news that the English radio had denied that it was the R.A.F. came like an anti-climax. The Italians denied it, too. Another mystery.

One day a newsvendor was brought in. His was a case of *propos défaitiste*. Selling his papers at the corner of Canebière and rue de Rome he made a habit of shouting, "If you wish to visit Italy then enlist in the Greek Army." So that was defeatism, too.

There were at the time in *Chaves* about seventy foreigners: Czechs, Germans, Slovakians, Poles, and Hungarians, *engagés volontaires* and legionaries. They had tried to get to Casablanca with forged discharge papers and had been caught.

Among them was a Hungarian, a simple peasant, who spoke only Hungarian, and he told me he had to jump five frontiers to get to France and join the French Army. Now this was the thanks he got from France. I asked him why he had come to fight for France. "I came," he replied, "because I was brought up by my father on the idea that France stood for liberty." The walls of the courtyard had turned the sky into a quadrangle; and that Hungarian peasant had left his sea-like plains to come and fight for this. Of course, it wasn't this. The idea remains and survives the Pétains, Lavals, and Darlans. Later he got released and was allowed to proceed to Oran, where they had put him in a camp with those of the late Foreign Legion who had nowhere to go.

But some of them were left behind and among them was a red-haired gentleman from Slovakia, faintly reminiscent of a jellyfish that the sea had shaken off in disgust and now rotting on the sunny beach.

The German Armistice Commission, the same as the Italian Armistice Commission, came to the prison every fortnight. You should have seen the scrubbing and cleaning there was in their honour. When the Commission came anybody who considered himself a German could ask for an interview and the Germans, with complete disregard of French laws, took them out and liberated them and sent them back to Germany or to a German-protected country, as the case may be. That Slovakian one day wrote to them. He told me so in the courtyard. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself," I said. "Anything to get out of here," he said. I was glad the Hungarian acted differently. However, it must be said for the prison authorities that they didn't hand over the Germans who refused to have anything to do with the Armistice Commission.

Then we had a German deserter. Nobody troubled him. He

was in for stealing, and after serving his sentence he was let out Talking of being ashamed, I met a man who was much lower than the jellyfish. Friends came to tell me in the courtyard that there was news indeed. An Englishman had arrived from England. Firs I didn't believe it, then I met him and quite believed it.

He was English, but had lived for twenty years in France, had a French wife and children. He joined up at the beginning of the war. The blitz and nostalgia for his family made him hide on a ship that brought back Vichy sailors, and now he was waiting to be released and join his family. "How are things in England?" I asked. This man had been in England a few weeks ago. "Everything is in ruins. It's terrible." "But they stand it. The morale is good, what?" "And fires and people getting killed."

He must have seen the disgust on my face. So he said, "My real home is France. France stopped fighting, so there was nothing else for me to do but to come back. You wouldn't believe it how difficult it was." I shrieked with laughter. "What are you laughing at?" I couldn't explain it. It was too heartbreakingly funny for words. To think that here was a man who was English working and scheming hard to get away from England, and on the other side was I, a foreigner, working and scheming equally hard to get to England. Then both of us meeting in the same prison. He got a fine of one hundred francs and was released and went to Savoy, near Aix-les-Bains, to rejoin his wife and kids.

The staff captain went. He said it was the greatest tragedy of this war that Weygand hadn't gone over to the English. The Germans hated him bitterly. I knew that from Paris.

Newspapers were regularly smuggled into prison. We knew the Greeks were licking the Italians, that Roosevelt was re-elected, that Wavell was advancing into Libya, and because rumour in prison is far from the madding crowd, the Italians were asking for an armistice and the Germans had no more petrol. Some of us expected the English at any moment. Their first task would be, of course, to liberate all of us. The sailor who killed his skipper by throwing him overboard and was detained for four years would be among the free, too. He said so.

A sturdy little Corsican came into my cell: he was about fifty and was the dirtiest little man in the world. If he couldn't do it otherwise, then he bought oranges from the canteen and spat the pips over the floor and trod on the peel so that the floor we used to keep so clean in Jack's and Mathieu's time groaned in horror. He was implicated in a big affair. It was a large robbery, but he was an old hand and knew how to play his cards. Since he belonged to the P.P.F.

he could have got his *liberté provisoire*, but because he had some fake witnesses he didn't want to get out before they were heard by the judge. He didn't want the Assizes to say later on that he doctored the evidence. He was a master liar. He boasted that one afternoon he drank one hundred and two pernods. I said I didn't believe it.

"But," he said, "afterwards I ate a large plate of macaroni and drank with it two litres of red wine." That clinched it. But with his one hundred and two pernods, and even with the sergeant of his regiment he killed during the last war, he was completely devoted to England. He had less interest in England than anybody I ever knew. He had never been there, his shabby, crooked life was quite independent of an English victory, yet he loved the idea; he would have died for it. He used to ask me in his illiterate manner to describe to him how English battleships fought, how the Spitfires brought down Boche planes, and how it would look the day the first English troops landed in his native Corsica. I said it would be the Marines, and I had to tell him all I knew of Marines. I think that deep attachment was the liking of one islander for another. Most Corsicans I met were equally keen on England.

The days were now becoming a constant blur. Hardly a beginning and the days passed quickly. I looked forward to the night, and when darkness came with the warder locking the door, my thoughts achieved such freedom as had never been given them while my so-called real self had been enjoying it. I wasn't thinking of my fate. I was no longer indignant for having been caught so stupidly; and I ceased to worry whether mine was a winged victory or just a bad joke. In fact, the old women could have come and I would have stood their spitting unmoved.

It was cold. The floor was cold, too. We hid our overcoats in the evening and so could put them on us at night. But only between the blankets, for every hour the light was switched on and the warder looked in through the spy-hole. He would have taken the coats mercilessly away had even an inch showed. The Mistral was blowing. The Mistral was one of the few members of the outer world that succeeded in getting into the prison. We could have done without it. During the nights it was warm under the overcoat and because my thoughts were so clear I pieced together in my mind the fall of France; and I felt my explanation was as good as any. Anyway, I'd been nearer to the people of Paris during those days of collapse than most casual observers, and because I love France.

The fall of France began with the French Revolution that never

was the revolution of the people for the people. It was but a change of guard: the middle classes took over from the more gifted nobility. It's food for thought that the leaders of the Revolution were of the same professions as the men who, as members of the French Parliament, had handed over the Republic to Pétain and his henchmen. Robespierre and Danton were lawyers, Marat the editor of a paper. Before and during her fall France was mostly run by lawyers and editors. The middle classes brought with them a different mentality. When Napoleon sneeringly called the English a nation of shopkeepers he didn't realize he would bequeath to posterity a nation of grocers. Winding its way through the restored Bourbons, Louis Philippe, and the flashing Louis Napoleon, the Revolution evolved the grocer spirit; and that spirit killed France. In the grocer spirit the Frenchman, with his logical mind, found the logical conclusions of the materialistic *Weltanschauung* the nineteenth century had evolved. Here follows the question: How then did France fight so splendidly during the last war? In a sarcastic mood I answered that query of mine.

But that, like most similar answers, only provokes a smile.

The Frenchman is fundamentally religious. More Gallican than Roman, but that has nothing to do with the systematic killing of religious life and religious feeling that the Third Republic had set down as one of its aims. Yes, I know about Voltaire and I know, too, that the Chevalier de la Barre didn't salute a procession; but millions did. It's no good coming to me with the Chevalier de la Barre. I know him intimately. His statue stands before the Sacré-Cœur. A great free-thinking triumph it was to erect it so close to the new church the *Archevêché de Paris* was building. But for one who spent much time in the neighbourhood of both, the Chevalier definitely seemed to have got the short end of the stick.

That scheduled killing of religion undermined France and came at a time when the flocking to town was undermining the morale of a fundamentally peasant population, and it developed at a time when general education brought the printed propaganda of such brilliant men as Anatole France within the reach of everybody. When dealing with the French it shouldn't be forgotten that their general education didn't only produce more thrillers and worse films. Serious authors were as much read as Edgar Wallace was on the other side of the Channel. Imagine an author in England (or a cinema producer in America) with such a wide public making continual fun of your belief, and simultaneously a world order developing around you in which only the material things of this world were of any account. Anatole France was but one of a host. Those brilliant

men of the *fin de siècle* and of the beginning of this were the unconscious helpmeets of the Panzer divisions.

The Third Republic had produced great things. The standard of living, with the exception of plumbing, was very high. There was education and there was the Empire which definitely was built by the Republic. The Empire was a great achievement. When France fell the Empire remained loyal. There's no parallel in history; and if any colony deserted Vichy, it was to go over to another Frenchman. The Republic produced its own type of statesmen. Politics for politics' sake, the welfare of the country for the country's sake, were not what the grocer wanted; he brought his spirit into public life and corruption was immense. It is unnecessary to point to the Stavisky affair or to the Mme Hanaud business: in both, every politician of a little self-respect was involved. The party and politics racket came into the lives of most Frenchmen. If you were an artist or an author you courted a politician, and when he was in office (sooner or later, every one of them was in office) a little sinecure was given you. The industrialist got his contract for money, the barkeeper gave bribes to get his licence, and so along the whole line.

I lived once in a little village. The municipal elections brought in a certain mayor who had been twice to jail for stealing. I asked a villager why they voted for him. The answer was that his opponent was worse. The very nature of political life made it well-nigh impossible for an honest man to cope with it. Hence it was practically the monopoly of men like Laval and Flandin. Laval's career in itself is the proof of the pudding called the Third Republic. And because it was money and nothing but money for those whose mission was to watch over France's destiny, the woollen stocking was satisfied and so was everybody who could get near to the big racket. It was a liberal racket: everybody could do his little stunt in it. The soul of the nation didn't shriek; it was muffled by the woollen stocking.

I am far from being an expert on the French constitution, but I know and have seen that democracy from a political point of view gave the average Frenchman only the right to choose among the grafters. Owing to the great power of the administration the nation had very little say in anything else. Beginning from the prefect, through the all-powerful *juges d'instruction*, and down to the *gardes mobiles* and gendarmes, the government exercised complete and arbitrary power while it lasted. It usually didn't last long. Hence the dictatorial system of France couldn't show itself in its true light; but on the other hand it had the disadvantage that the circus in

power had to do its grabbing quickly. Of course I am aware that it's the unfortunate trend of modern democracy to leave the moonshine of voting while letting red tape do the real ruling, but in France all the faults, and necessarily the virtues of our system, had reached their logical conclusion. England was saved from the grocer with wings of red tape by the high standard of the British civil service and because, thank God, the Englishman does not possess a logical mind.

Sense of adventure went: red tape and the knowledge that political graft paid better killed it. The Maginot Line was the symbol of the death of the French spirit of adventure. The Maginot Line was the grocer's bolted door. As I thought of that it gave me pleasure to think of that French officer who had advocated tanks, for wars could be won only by daring movements and not by standing in one place, however expensive that place might be. It was a comfort to lie on the palliasse because I had a high opinion of that officer.

I've heard men of the right accusing men of the left—and I've heard *ad nauseam* men of the left accusing men of the right—of having brought about the defeat of France: the *Cagoulards*, the this and the that. In my opinion—and I felt history would prove me right whatever the crimes of hooded and unhooded men of the right were—the left had prepared the terrain for them. Teachers, with their irreligious and unpatriotic trend of teaching, have a lot to account for, too.

Driven by a misplaced, unselfish motive, a minority revolted against the *pourriture* of public life and saw with a sickening heart the course French life was taking. That minority belonged to the officer class. Those men came mostly of religious families, and money and grabbing wasn't their aim in life. The clever German propaganda machine found easily the lies that turned their heads. A sorry affair; it resulted in French officers sympathizing with the enemy and helping him to win. They were dupes and their punishment came almost too quickly; they couldn't enjoy the complete disaster they helped to bring about. I happen to have known a few!

The great mass of soldiers who ran and deserted were the other side of the picture, though in a sense it wasn't the other side at all. Owing to the advantages belonging to a political party implied at the time, men of France ceased to be Frenchmen, but were Fascists, Communists, Radicals and the rest of it. So they went to war this time not as a nation but as political partisans. To push it to the extreme you might say that taking such-and-such a hill wasn't in the interest of the *Union Socialiste*, and to blow up the bridge wasn't what the P.S.F. wanted. And then there was no authority left. In

Great Britain there's the Crown, but in France what was there in June 1940? The government on the run. On what could a Frenchman fall back at that time? Not on France; the parties had put France far into the background. On the party? You couldn't fall back on that sort of thing. The very fact that the name of Pétain could rally so many Frenchmen only bears out my contention that fundamentally the Frenchman respects the things or names that deserve respect. This, I know, is a royalist argument, or tantamount to it; yet I have no axe to grind one way or the other. Clémenceau got that respect, Foch got it; but who was there in that corruption who deserved respect and whom the French could have fallen back on? A Pierre Cot or a Jean Zay?

When you get a disease like tuberculosis there are many factors that must be considered to account for the weak state the body was in when it let the disease through. Though I don't want to go back to Adam and Eve, I must glance back as far as Napoleon, who nicely killed off France's male population: in the First German World War, France lost the rest, so to speak. There were two Germans left for one Frenchman, and after all that sacrifice—take only Nivelle's Champagne offensive—the enemy was there again before the nation had time to recover from the bloodshed. A disheartening experience, and the faults of British and French politicians of the last decade had been beautifully exploited by German propaganda. In fact, German propaganda thrived on it. Anglo-French relations of the years that followed the Entente were bad, because an age of half-measures and of mutual distrust followed it. Nobody feels more with the French than I when the Anglo-German Naval Pact, the re-militarization of the Rhineland and the British government's attitude towards the Franco-Russian alliance are mentioned. But with the utter rottenness of French politics, could England have been so enthusiastic in supporting France? Anyway, what's the good of harping on that? The English kept their pledge and fought and will fight to liberate France, and France now knows what life is without England. But because German propaganda once again had taken advantage of that period of mutual distrust and half-measures, Anglo-French relations, or lack of relations, of the last twenty years were one more germ to help the disease.

Came the eight months' lull. Many French friends have assured me that if the Germans had attacked at the start the French Army would have accounted for itself differently. It's quite possible. For those eight months of lull not only gave the Germans time to let their propaganda find root, but the Daladier-Reynaud governments helped the Germans with their insipid idiotic propaganda. You

can't fight without hate. Hate of the German is practically the life-preserving instinct of the Frenchman; and even in bringing that out the government failed miserably. When war broke out a woman said to me in Aix-les-Bains that in the afternoon we would hear the tocsin: there was no tocsin. Carlyle would have deplored that; and Carlyle would have been right: it was the tocsin that had given Dumouriez victory. In the first phase of this war France was bereft of the tocsin. In Paris, on the Champs Elysées, I often passed the shop-window of the German Mercedes cars. That shop-window was unhurt. It had seemed to me that something must be fundamentally wrong with France because nobody had broken that window. If you haven't the energy to break windows where will you find it for breaking the enemy? The eight months' lull put France to sleep and we know that the grocer believes in early to bed, which, according to him, is healthy and wise.

But all those deep-rooted faults weren't enough to make France fall; you needed the new-fangled warfare as perfectioned by the Germans. And had France's spirit been the true French spirit the Panzers and Stukas would have still defeated France. Had there been no Channel, England would have been overrun too. With all my faith and flaming loyalties, I wasn't yet so blind as not to see that. However, if there had been no moral collapse the defeat of metropolitan France would have taken longer and the enemy's losses would have been immense. The French Fleet would have been saved, the generals in Africa and in the Middle East would have continued the fight, the Italians would have been smashed in Africa and the whole war would have taken a different course. The Germans would have had to immobilize many more troops by having to occupy an overtly inimical France in its breadth and length, and there would have been no helpful leakages in the blockade with the help of snug Vichy. For the final blaze of the grocer is Vichy. Pétain is the last of the grocers. In one of his speeches he alone took the responsibility before history: he couldn't have been thinking of history. I'm sure he was thinking of sausages, tins and cheeses, to save which he not only deserted his ally but a thousand French years.

The future, there from the palliasse, appeared to have but one solution: a complete fusion between England and France. Just because their characters are so different it becomes a necessity. And they need one another. Each has something the other lacks, and without having it near at hand the other is miserable. It had been a great English fallacy, or call it tragedy, that England thought she wasn't a Continental power, that the affairs of the Continent

had nothing to do with her. The Channel is a tank trap, neither more nor less, and England was a Continental power throughout her history. Her wars show that. The British blood that flowed to build the Empire was nothing when compared to the continuous stream that wetted the soil of the Low Countries and of France. Hence, after this war, England will have to say good-bye to the pompous idea of being splendidly isolated from the affairs of the Continent, yet at the same time having to fight for life or death on the Continent more often than necessary. On that new road she'll need a strong France: without France she cannot walk it. Nobody could hope for a more understanding and trusting partner than France, saved from German death, would be. As a Breton who was in *Chaves* for similar reasons as myself put it, England has a great hand to play after this war in France.

Such an opportunity wouldn't come again, and I so very much hoped both would take full advantage of it. The cold had definitely got through the palliasse and was having a go at me. But I was already asleep.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

It was getting on for the middle of December and the cold was becoming the chief feature of prison life. Now and then the Mistral got hold of the cold and shoved it through the creaks and broken windows with incredible velocity. The whole prison seemed to be coughing its lungs out.

On one such cold night the door of the cell was opened and a tall, portly man was pushed in. In bad French he asked us with a wan smile to please excuse him but he was very nervous. I told him we had all been nervous at the start, but it went after a time. I was a bit of an old-timer by then. I asked him if he was Spanish, and he said he was. He was Juan Morata, who used to be Minister of Health in Negrin's government. Next day Miguel Portela, who used to be Prime Minister before the *Frente Popular*, came in. I was sorry for the old man. He stood it with dignity and I must say the burglars and pimps treated him decently. They were both in for trying to get out of France with forged papers. Both got a *non-lieu*.

With Morata, because we were in the same cell, we talked much about the Spanish Civil War. It was amazing how little he knew about it. I left Spain for the last time well before the Civil War; my knowledge of the Civil War was very scanty; however, it seemed more sweeping and more to the point than the rather nebulous talk of that man who had sat in the Cabinet. On second reflection it was natural.

All my life I have wondered at the shortsightedness of statesmen, and have had to smile indulgently when a statesman shouted 'Eureka' for having discovered something or other the man in the street had known for ages. Morata was disgusted with the Communists and the Anarchists; they let him down, they let the revolution down. His was the hangover of the intellectual who gave up the comfort and hot smoky air of the cafés of Madrid and Barcelona and sallied forth to test the tittle-tattle of the cafés. I told him so. He took it well.

He was in a great funk. He expected the French to hand him over to Franco. To calm him I used to say that a Minister of Health wasn't important enough. Fear and worry made him ill and he was taken to the prison infirmary. The day he went an epileptic gangster was shoved into our cell. He got an attack in the afternoon and the water-jug missed me by an inch. It was an unpleasant affair, and though the medical orderly said he faked it we were glad when he was taken to the infirmary.

The cell was now becoming a kind of juvenile cell. There was a boy called André. When he made his entrance he said he had already served a term of one year. After a while he confessed it wasn't true, he had only said that because he wanted to boast, to impress us—as though a scientist were to say he had won the Nobel Prize. That boy was in for an offence for which not even good old patient print would stand. I thought he was a nauseating creature, but the forced intimacy of prison made us strike up some sort of friendship, and he possessed some sterling qualities like everybody else. I shan't forget that once during that wretched hour between four and five in the afternoon, as I was pacing the cell, he turned to me: "You have the *cafard*." "Seems like it," I said. I saw he was thinking, then after some time of heavy thinking his face lit up. He found the way out for my *cafard*. "Let's have a game of *belotte*," he said. I was moved.

The cards we had were cards a *gamelcur* made and sold. It was forbidden to play cards and we had to keep a sharp look-out whenever we played. We played the whole day long. Mathieu never played. I often asked him to join us, but he refused. After we had

nagged the life out of him, he said with a smile, 'all right—if we wanted him to play so very much.' . . . We played for cigarettes. Within a brief half-hour he won all my cigarettes and the cigarettes of the rest of us. Then he stopped. "You see," he said, "that's why I didn't want to play." "You could have played straight," I said. "I don't know how to play straight," he seriously said.

The other youth in the cell was just past eighteen. He came of a good family, his father being the resident surgeon of a famous hospital. The boy came to Marseilles and stole books: he worked wholesale. He told me that if he got out he would join the special guard of the Maréchal. I wished the Maréchal joy of him.

On 1st December, on my lawyer's advice, I made an application for the *liberté provisoire*. On the 3rd, I was taken in the Black Maria to the Palais de Justice, and at half-past eight in the morning I signed Léon's refusal to free me. Then in the underground cell I waited till eight in the evening to return to the prison. That was the day Pétain visited Marseilles.

The day before saw many new arrivals in *Chaves*. Anybody that appeared suspect was thrown into jail. Mostly Gaullists and Communists; a ship in the harbour of Marseilles had been filled with them, too. In *Chaves* there wasn't enough room for all the suspects. From outside the noise of marching and counter-marching and of songs and shouting drifted into the gloom. I thought it ill-suited the last of the grocers to indulge in such Teutonic display.

I amused myself reading and re-reading the reasons Léon gave for refusing my temporary freedom. There were three. The first said that I might try and doctor the evidence against me, the second that I might hop it, the third that I was dangerous as far as public security was concerned. The latter flattered me. I slowly reached the conclusion of my fellow prisoners that only an English landing could get me out.

But on 14th December a fellow prisoner who worked in the office came to tell me that my *instruction* was closed and I was to answer for my sins before the *Correctionel*. So the military authorities had returned my case. On Monday the lawyer came and confirmed it: he expected my case would soon come up. On Wednesday, at noon, one of the warders came in and said to me, "Ah! so you're for de Gaulle and Muselier?" Then he handed me my *feuille*. The official name is *Citation au Prévenu* (summons to the accused), and it is the paper that tells the prisoner to appear on such and such a date before the court. It was an absorbing document. The charge against me finally was that I made propaganda for a foreign power,

enemy of France, or had used expressions that had an evil influence on the Army and the populations (one wasn't enough). Then it went on to specify my crime.

'*Ayant notamment dit qu'il n'y a que deux Français, de Gaulle et Muselier, la victoire Anglaise est certaine et on peut rallier Casablanca avec l'Angleterre en soudoyant des marins français.*'

Underneath that was given the act under which I was charged. There were two of them: one of September 1939, the other of January 1940; both acts were the product of the Daladier government. That seems to contain a fine moral, that once a government starts going in for dictatorial measures it makes it easy for a dictatorship; once the way is easy, full dictatorship comes more often than not. As a matter of fact, there was surprisingly little Vichy had to change to turn the land of liberty, equality and fraternity into a second-rate edition of the Brauhaus of Munich.

I was to appear before the Fifth Chamber on 24th December. An interesting Christmas to look forward to.

My lawyer came. I told him the prison considered me lost, because the President of the Fifth Chamber, M. Couteaux, was a terror.

"He hates thieves," the lawyer said. "He gives them stiff sentences. But your case is different." He also told me the President came from Dunkerque. That, somehow gave me hope.

The last days were endless. I reflected again that in prison only the first and the last days mattered: the rest was just grey and dead. The man with a sentence of five years behind him waits, during the last days, the same way as the man who is in only for two months. The only difference being that the man with five years behind him could never again be of any use to the society that had been instrumental in giving him the five years.

The cold was increasing and on the 24th Marseilles was covered with snow. That day a few men died in *Chaves*: snow was just a bit too much for weakness and despair.

My eyes were blinded by the whiteness of the town as we drove in the Black Maria to the Palais de Justice. There were about ten of us to be tried in the Fifth Chamber. The gendarmes took us into a little room that opened on to the court room. I could see where the president and the two judges would sit, but the public was hidden from me. That annoyed me, for I chiefly came to see Nona. Sudden commotion and the president and the two judges came in. The president was a hunch-

back, but he had a sensitive face and his eyes were resplendent with intelligence. I felt that after sixty-two days I was about to speak to a man who would understand. Peace settled down on me.

Some were acquitted, some got light sentences. A thief got two years, another five years of the *trique*: he wept when he returned to us, not on account of the prison in store for him but because of the *trique*. They couldn't speak; they stammered, contradicted themselves and put up a poor show.

Then my name was called. I walked in. The gendarme remained at the door and in there I was unaccompanied. Almost a sense of freedom. I shot a quick glance at the gallery. There was Jack in the background and Nona was sitting a little nearer. I brought a smile on to my prison face and then let the smile go, which was easy, and faced the president. He looked at me and said, "*C'est une histoire anglaise.*"

The judges looked at me, too, and the *procureur* said that one of the witnesses against me was on sick leave, but the others were outside. For a moment I had a terrible fear that the hearing would be adjourned. The president nodded, then he said this was a dubious case. His eyes were on me. He asked if I spoke French well. I said I did.

"Tell me what happened that night?" he said.

"Monsieur le Président," I said, "I was in that bar and there were three wounded French soldiers, and because I'm deeply attached to your unhappy country I sent them twenty francs as a gesture of admiration, for they had lost their legs fighting for France against the traditional enemy." He nodded.

"That's right," he said. "You didn't seek them out. Now, did you use the words you are accused of speaking?"

"Even supposing I had wanted to use them, I didn't have a chance, because the soldier, Van der Bock, the moment he came up to me started to beg money from me."

"Sit down," he said.

He motioned to my lawyer to speak. He was a decent fellow, that lawyer: he refrained from spoiling my chances. That's all I could say for his speech. Then the president and the two judges whispered together and I felt that outside Van der Bock was straining on the leash to get in and have his say. The president spoke.

"Given that the only witness against the accused admitted that he asked for money, given that the other witnesses heard nothing, and given that the accused kept to his statement from the start, I find there isn't enough ground to convict him. *Relaxé* (released)."

That meant the case was dismissed and the prisoner would be

discharged. Though it's strictly against etiquette, I couldn't refrain from saying, "Thank you very much."

As I came out of court and went into the little room one of the gendarmes said to me, "You see that statue of *Marianne* behind the judges? Well, one day the statue of your friend, de Gaulle, will be in its place." "Of course," I said.

So the prison had taught me little. I wasn't yet free. I had to drive back in the Black Maria and wait till three in the afternoon, when the chief warder kindly returned my tie and let me go. The snow was blinding white as I came into freedom. There was an Albanian with me, who was released for the fifth time. He had no identity papers. "They'll pick me up again next week," he said.

When I took a tram (I used to hear those trams day and night) and the ticket collector came to me, my heart began to beat violently and I was nearly sick; his dark uniform made me think he was a policeman. I had looked forward to my first day of freedom; I had dreamed of it. I had planned the meal I would have during those long nights.

Nona and I went to dine at half-past seven. I ate some *hors d'œuvres* and then I couldn't eat any more. The restaurant was filling up, that made me nervous. I said there were too many people about, and anyhow, I was tired; it was nearly eight. I should have been in bed two hours ago. So we went. In the hotel Nona casually said, "What are we going to do about Léon?" "What about him?" "The money he took."

She had written me a long letter about him and the lawyer had promised to take it in. He forgot. So now she had to tell me the wretched tale from beginning to end.

On 26th October, when I appeared for the first time before Léon, he sent for Nona, and after seeing her and I was led back to the cell, he sent out his *greffier* on some errand and said this to her: "Madame, do you want your husband to get out?" She said that was her only wish. So he said that a lawyer would cost a lot of money and the outcome would remain in the air. But he, *le juge d'instruction*, could set me free immediately. Therefore she should give him three thousand francs and I would be a free man within half an hour. She gave him the money. She had lived long enough in France to know that money went a long way and because she came from the great Western Democracy his offer wasn't so surprising. When he pocketed the money he warned her that, if she spoke about it, not only would I be kept on in prison but she would go to prison, too. Now I saw clear. That was why Nona said I would be out in half an hour, that was why he refused her the permit to see me, and

that was why he confiscated the censored letters. I was utterly disgusted.

"The difference between the Third Republic and Vichy is this," I said. "In the Republic you paid a little and got what you paid for. Under Vichy you pay a lot and they put you in jail for it."

I'm sure there are thousands of people who would call this a true definition.

After Christmas we went to the lawyer and asked him what could we do. He said nothing, because Nona might get thrown into prison for corruption. So there was nothing to do about it. All he could say was that it was preposterous that with my money in his pocket he refused the *liberté provisoire*, the granting of which was completely at his discretion.

"I shall find a way some day to make it public," I said. Well, I have found it.

Now six weeks of utter deception followed. The crescendo died away and soon the orchestra couldn't be heard. Failure rushed at me from every corner. I went to see the Englishman who was Nona's friend's friend. "Have you learned to close your trap?" were his first words. "No." The French friend of Nona's friend said to me that I was probably suspected of being a spy, so I should forgive him for not wishing to be seen with me. I forgave him. Before me there remained the aim, that hadn't varied and never could, of getting to England. I thought out all sorts of schemes: they were all nipped in the bud. My first idea was inspired by a circular Nona got during the period I was in prison. It was from the American Consulate saying that alien husbands and wives of American citizens could obtain the American visa without difficulty. With that visa you could get to Lisbon. From Lisbon it would be easy to get to England. Without it you could enter neither Spain nor Portugal. Nona was game and we went to the American Consulate and there they said they wanted documentary evidence that we were married. We said there wasn't any because we got married in Paris and had left the marriage certificate behind. The Consulate most obligingly offered to get it from Paris. That being more than I wanted I gave up that line as a bad attempt.

It reached my ears that there was a local branch of some American organization in Marseilles which was able to get American visas for people who had reasons to get away from the Continent. I went to that organizaion. The whole place smelt of a third-rate Viennese café. I saw the man in charge. He said they obtained visas only for anti-Fascists. Since I was only pro-English they could do

nothing for me. You could, of course, make an application for an American visa, but that meant waiting for many months. Before that the Germans might be in Marseilles, or, which interested me more, the invasion of England would be on. I didn't want to miss that. It had always seemed to me that if, after the German attempt of invasion, I could see the Union Jack still floating over England, then the memory of the Swastika on the Arc de Triomphe would be erased.

During my tenure of cell No. 8, Nona repeatedly wrote to the address in the unoccupied zone the banker had given us before we left Paris. Never an answer; as I've said, there was a lot of vanishing those days.

The coming of the Germans to Marseilles was the rumour most current in that snowy January. The prestige of Pétain had risen since he dismissed Laval. It was said he was resisting the Germans and Germany was furious and would occupy the unoccupied zone. Pétain was going to fight them: he might move the seat of his government to Africa and join England in the fight. Some prophets weren't loath to prophesy that in a little while de Gaulle would be Pétain's minister of war. I feel certain that sort of rumour was spread to popularize the old man: I don't credit the insipid minds of Vichy with it. It came from the fountain-head of propaganda. What a subtle piece of work to let the patriotic French stand by and help a government that was supposedly anti-German and in the meantime was playing Germany's game. But that kind of talk persisted and you often enough met that queer combination of wishing England victory and swearing by Pétain. The coming of the new American ambassador, Admiral Leahy, helped Vichy a lot. It immensely raised its prestige, and kept many from England and General de Gaulle.

No legal road to England being at my disposal, I looked for the other road, the one that twists and is crooked. I hadn't to look long. Wherever I went I ran into men who had been in *Chaves* with me. If I spoke to anybody who hadn't, then he'd been there before me; if not he, then it was his brother. To go to prison was the same to the people I met in Marseilles (I wasn't specially looking for them) as to go to point-to-points for hunting people. Which division was I in, and what was the number of my cell and did I know his cousin, or his brother-in-law or his best pal who was still in or had left a little before me? If in the street a man of mournful countenance stopped me and reminded me of the unforgettable days we'd spent together in *Chaves*, I would have despised myself had I turned away, or reminded him that in the outside world our paths didn't meet.

I was free, in a sense; but only in a sense: I was living within the striped shadow of *Chaves*. Once in prison, always in prison, was the motto of those days.

It goes without saying that my late prison companions and their friends knew of thousands of illegal roads out of France. To be hidden on board ships was the usual offer. Colossal sums were asked; from fifty thousand francs upwards. You paid the money, then on a dark night you were whisked on board a ship and when the sun rose the rock of Gibraltar was before you. In *Chaves* I'd seen plenty of men who tried to get away like that and who had either been handed over to the police by those who collected the money, or had been taken on board ships, hidden in holds and starved for days, and the ships finally took them to Oran or Algiers, where half dead, they surrendered to the police. Some, after paying and getting nothing in return, went and denounced the money collectors, and as a result both parties landed in jail. Anyway, I had no fifty thousand francs. There was another variety of crooks. They stipulated a certain sum, no questions, and guaranteed that you would walk straight into the British Consulate at Lisbon, Madrid or, nearer, Barcelona. Those big, silent men were rather impressive when they said you either trusted them or both of you were wasting time.

It happened that a particular *Chaves* pal heard me say that I was more or less one of them, having suffered as they had, and incidentally I wanted to get to England to help the cause of their country, too; so they should make it possible for me to get away. He stared at me as you stare at a rare bird and said he was interested in money and not in sentimental talk. I looked for Mathieu, but he wasn't in town. Jack was too upset by the bad turn his case was taking. He got six months for receiving; and I know he was innocent. In that swamp of crookedness I saw no way out. That maddened me because there were more than a handful that managed to get away.

My vitality was gone. It had remained in *Chaves* and I believe that was due to rising at seven and lying down at six. The little I had of me in the deception and the snow was beat in the morning before I got up. Nightmare was on top of nightmare when I slept. I awoke at night and panic gripped me as I looked at the window. The shadows were like bars. If towards dawn a door opened or a key turned in a lock somewhere in the hotel I rose with a start and was ready to jump to the door, for at *Chaves* in the morning you had to fly to the door. If you didn't bring your clothes in quick enough the warder banged the door on you and you weren't dressed in time for the morning walk. Verily, *Chaves* held on to me.

Parallel with that, searching and not finding petered out my last days with Nona. Since I returned from *Chaves* she was convinced there was nothing else left for her but to let the first part of her prophecy come true and return to America. There wasn't even a way out for me alone. For two to get away like that was but a madman's dream: it had been mine. She often said had we stayed on in Paris it couldn't have been worse. At any rate, it couldn't have been more of a dying bubble. She was angry with Thérèse and the woman with the dog for having started me off on this, according to her, hopeless chase. And with *Chaves* an ever-present skeleton, without the grace and discretion of a cupboard, I wasn't a cheerful influence either. Thus, when her brother wrote to her from America that she should go home, I said, too, there was nothing else for her to do.

She was to leave Marseilles on 4th February, and on the 3rd she went to stay at the P.L.M. hotel adjoining the station. Her train left at dawn. It was a cold afternoon, with the Mistral trying to raise the frozen snow. We stood at the top of the stairs where you get a fine view of the crooked town of Marseilles. "I wish," I said, "I'd broken my leg when I went down these steps for the first time in October." "I wish," Nona said, "I'd broken my neck." Later she said I had chosen England from the start and now that she was going I would travel light and would surely get there. She had predicted that, too. It was brutally cold on the platform. Steam was rising. The train disappeared in the steam before it was out of the station. I thought the cup was full to the brim. But the cup had other ideas.

There had been in *Chaves* a man of undetermined nationality. The sort of person who hails from the region which is near to Bohemia, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, and Roumania. He called himself a Czech or a Pole, whichever profited him the more. As German was the language he spoke most fluently, he would have called himself a German had it suited his book. He had quite a quick brain and was deep in that underworld which Eastern European refugees had created in Marseilles. There was no gun-play in their midst—guts were needed for guns—but false passports, racketeering, if it went without bodily danger, and the black market. Food was getting scarce and they apparently were trying to thank France for having given them refuge by raising prices, cornering food, in short, endeavouring to make the misery of the defeated more miserable. But I knew nothing of that. In *Chaves* he told me he was a lawyer and wanted to get to some safe South American country; and he knew the ropes for leaving France. I ran into him on the Canebière

a short while before Nona's departure, and I asked him if he knew of a *combine* to get to Gibraltar or anywhere near England. He said he would let me know. Then I met two Polish officers; they had been prisoners in Germany, had escaped and were looking, too, for the road to England. A few days later the undetermined man came along with another undetermined man and said here was the man for me.

He had a red face, humble manners and said he was a diamond merchant from Antwerp, and both swore he was straight and honest, in fine, an oasis in the crookedness the town of Marius was. I mentioned I wasn't alone, because two Poles were in the same boat with me and we couldn't afford to pay too exorbitant a price. The diamond merchant said he would have a look round and would find what we wanted. He appeared timorous, and his friend told me, after he had bowed himself out, that it had been difficult to persuade him to meet me because he was afraid of *mouchards* and the police in general. But I'd made a good impression on him and he would do his best. We met again, and the man of diamonds informed me he was in possession of three French demobilization papers, and the warrants were made out for Beyrouth, in Syria; from there we could get with ease to the English. He asked ten thousand francs for each of them. A furious argument followed, at the end of which he halved the price. Even so, it would have meant parting with my treasured twenty pounds, and for the Poles it would have meant, too, parting with everything they possessed. I wanted to see those demobilization papers, but he said he would show them only when the money was there. He would put the papers into an envelope, I should do the same with the money, and simultaneously we would exchange our envelopes. That was, he said, his way of doing business. If I didn't trust him the deal was off. He was giving the papers so dirt cheap that he really didn't care whether the transaction came off or no. I said I would speak to the Poles. I fixed an appointment with him in the afternoon. That was the day before Nona left.

The Poles said it was a trap. There would be old newspapers or something in the envelope. I said I thought the same, but we should put ourselves into the man's place; he could mistrust us, too, because if we had the papers in our hands we could refuse paying for them and he had no remedy against that. The Poles thought I should persuade him to show the papers before we paid. I said I would try. In the afternoon the diamond merchant showed signs of impatience. He exclaimed that he transacted ten times bigger deals with less talk. Then I got the idea he should hand those

papers to his friend the lawyer and the lawyer should make the deal with us. He flatly refused.

"If you don't trust me, good-bye," he said. I said let's meet again next day. There was nobody else on the horizon, and I hoped I could think out a solution to suit both parties. He agreed to see me next day.

"We're being seen together too often," he said. "What happens if a policeman comes up and asks what we're doing?" I said policemen hadn't the habit of asking me such questions. He said it had happened to him and to his friends. The police are suspicious of foreigners. If we were stopped by the police we would both say that he wanted an American visa and because he didn't know any English I was helping him to get the necessary affidavit. I said that was all right. He implored me not to forget that.

As I was walking to the station hotel to Nona a young man came up to me in the street, and I recognized the pleasant youth from the anthropometry in *Chaves* who had uttered the first kind words in that hell. I knew his history. He was the son of a French officer of high rank, had studied law in Paris, had fought in the war, and had come a cropper owing to a woman who denounced him for selling her furs for her and not paying her the full price he got. He had told me the woman was an adventuress. He had been in love with her, got a buyer for her furs to help her to pay her hotel bill and she did him the dirty, figuring that his father would pay through the nose to keep his son out of prison. But she slipped up, for Yves, that was the young man's Christian name, was arrested before his father could intervene. He got four months. A plausible story, and in prison he had been considered a gentleman and the warders respected him because he came of an excellent Corsican family. He had very good manners and used to send books to me.

I stopped, and we talked and he said he would like to see me again, so I said what about to-morrow, to-morrow being an empty day since Nona would be gone. He asked me to meet him at a certain pub and when I went into the pub I recognized in the pub-keeper the late *gameleur* of my cell. I couldn't get away from *Chaves* even for a minute. Yves was punctual, we chatted and I told him of my problem.

"That man wants to do you in," he said. I nodded. It looked like it. "Look here," he went on, "in this town you'll come a bad cropper: you don't know how crooked it is. I like you, and I want to help you. I know the type of the diamond merchant. I bet he's one of the black-market men of the *Café Riche* and the *Glacier*. I don't need money—I've no personal interest in this—I want to help

you. Let me see the man and if there are such papers I'll get him to show them to me. And if I say it's on the level then you can fork out the money." I thanked him and said it was very nice of him. He told me to go to the appointment, then he would come into the bar a little later, walk to the lavatory and I was to follow him in a few minutes. Having had a look at the diamond merchant he would then tell me what the next move should be.

It happened as we had arranged, and when I went out he said it was indeed a black-market man, a dealer in false passports and in other shady matters. "Tell him to come here to-morrow morning and tell him you'll introduce one of your friends to him and that you want to make the deal through your friend. That's your last condition. Leave the rest to me. I'll see the papers, no doubt of that." I told that to the merchant after a little tittle-tattle. He agreed; first, however, he wanted to make certain my friend wasn't connected with the police. I assured him he wasn't.

"You'll see it's going to work out all right," the merchant said, rubbing his hands that were as red as his face. Then suddenly I felt sick of him and his nasty humble look, and of the two Poles who calmly sat in pubs and drank and expected me to do the running about, and I said the deal was off. I'll find something else. "You don't trust me? What's the matter?" "I don't like it." He whined and seemed so keen that I said let it be as it had been planned. He named a different bar for the morning, and once more reminded me about the American visa and my friend should say he being a Frenchman would give him a hand to get his exit visa and I should impress that on my friend. "All right," I said, "though I honestly don't know why you're in such a funk." He said he was an old fox and very cautious.

Now the curious coincidence, or coincidences, occurred, that after Nona's departure I took a room in the first hotel where an empty room was to be found. It was still dark, and only after I was a few hours in the hotel I noticed that the hotel was on the Avenue Léon Gambetta. That was a bad omen. Next morning I went to fetch Yves at his flat. He lived on the Avenue Léon Gambetta, too, and in the same building was the *Bar Triomphe* in which I met Van der Bock and the wounded men. The merchant waited for us at the *Bar Lafayette*, which was on Avenue Léon Gambetta, too. Enough to put any normal man off; but that definition didn't include me at the time.

The merchant and I sat in the bar, and at a table not far from ours sat a woman and a fleshy man. They and the merchant were

assiduously exchanging glances. "Are those your friends?" I asked. "No." "Then why do you exchange looks with them?" "I don't. You're mistaken."

He and Yves got on well. They had seen each other previously in the cafés of the Canebière, and the merchant was ready to discuss the affair with him. Yves said it would be better if I left them alone and the merchant was of the same opinion, saying I was too nervous and didn't seem accustomed to serious business transactions. So the little boy, having been put into his place, went away. Later Yves joined me and said by the evening he would definitely know if those papers existed. I thanked him, and we parted. I rather congratulated myself on having found an intermediary. I went to see the Poles. They were already drunk and were ready to start for Beyrouth or any other place. I waited the whole afternoon for Yves; he never turned up. In the evening I went to his flat. Nobody was there. I went again in the morning and my knock wasn't answered. I didn't like that. I remembered the merchant lunched at a certain restaurant near the post-office. I went there. He was just coming out of the restaurant. When he caught sight of me he rushed up to me. Humbleness had left his face; it was now a loathsome thing. "Your friend," he panted, "stole everything I have." I stared at him. "What?" "He brought a policeman and then they held a revolver against me and then they went to my room and everything I had was taken from me. But he'll pay for it. You, too."

I felt quite stupid and stared at him. Then he shouted he knew where to find me and rushed away. I was aghast, though not really surprised. I was expecting something like that since I left *Chaves*. The afternoon papers carried a long account of an honourable diamond merchant having been turned out of all his possessions. The papers said he had met a man on business and they went to an hotel the name of which I'd never heard, and which was in quite a different part of the town and there, as they came down the stairs, a man accosted them, showed a police badge and took everything from them including the merchant's watch. The policeman held a revolver in his hand and ordered them to go to the merchant's flat. They went and the policeman searched the flat and then searched the other man's flat, too, and eventually disappeared with the suits and shirts of the merchant. Now the police were looking for Yves who had behaved suspiciously and the merchant accused him of having been whispering to the false policeman while they rode in a taxi on their way to the merchant's flat.

My first impression was that Yves was a crook, too, and had taken

the demobilization papers from the merchant. That was the only thing I could think of. Probably he wanted to sell them himself to us. But who was the policeman? And why were they in that hotel? As far as I knew they were to meet in a bar.

My next thought was that if it ever came out about those papers I was in for it again. I could smell *Chaves*. Anyway, it wasn't so far from me. I rushed to the Poles, who were drunk and happy. I told them we were in for trouble. We'd been double-crossed in true Marseilles fashion. That sobered them a bit and they said it was the best thing to beat it. They would go to Nice; I had better go with them. I went back to my hotel to pack my things and there was a message from Yves that he would be round in the morning and I should without fail wait for him. So I didn't go to Nice but the fool that I was thought there must be a complete mistake and Yves would explain it in the morning. Now it seems to me that was chiefly an excuse to do nothing. Without vitality you can't do much; in my case it was sheer nothing. I went to bed and lay on my back and looked at the ceiling and, generally speaking, was past caring.

Yves came in the morning. He had a long story to tell. It was confused; but one thing stood out. When the false policeman searched the merchant no demobilization papers were on him; when he ransacked his flat there were no papers to be found either. Hence, all along he intended to rob us of fifteen thousand francs. I asked Yves what they had been doing in that hotel? Yves said that as a matter of fact it wasn't only the papers they were going to discuss but a friend of Yves had dollars to sell and he had casually mentioned that to the merchant in the morning. Also in that hotel lived some friends of the merchant, and he was taking him to them to sell the dollars. He took twenty dollars with him as a start, and the false policeman had robbed him of them. They didn't lose their time once they got together.

It all seemed very fishy to me. He hadn't the faintest idea who the false policeman was. I asked him why didn't he go to the police. His answer was logical enough. Both dollars and demobilization papers were against the law. Yves thought he would go to the merchant and see him because they ought to say the same to the police, so that nothing should leak out about the papers. He was fidgety about the papers. He, as a Frenchman, was liable to very severe punishment if it came to light he had been helping a foreigner to leave France. He entreated me not to lose my head if the police sent for me, but to remain firm and say that I introduced him because he knew some local official who might help him to get an exit visa. I said I wouldn't lose my head. Yves went.

I spent the rest of the day mostly in bed. Next morning two detectives came and said I should go with them. I meekly followed. The fear I had brought with me out of *Chaves* now almost left me.

I was at the *Evêché* again. I sat on a bench in a corridor with two detectives. I sat outside a door, and in that room a loud argument went on. Once a detective came out and asked whether it was true that I knew Yves from Paris. "He says he met you there." I thought that sounded better than having met in prison, so I said yes, I knew him from Paris. A little later the merchant and Yves came out. Yves was without his tie. He screamed to me, "Look what this dirty false dollar dealer has got us into." The merchant, as he passed, whispered to me in German that I shouldn't forget it. I had introduced Yves as the man who would get the exit visa. Yves had only time to tell me that when he got to the merchant's flat the merchant grabbed him by the neck and shouted 'Police,' till the police came and he had him arrested. A very high-handed way of dealing. Now I clearly saw that his main aim was to get in first.

Then came the luncheon interval, and I was taken into a large room. Two men sat there—both without ties. About two, an inspector got going on me. I should, he contended, tell him the truth. It was no good shielding either of the other two. One was a well-known black-market racketeer, the other a little pimp. I said Yves wasn't a pimp. He laughed at that and told me Yves was kept by a prostitute and when he was searched they found on him a note-book in which was the entry that the proprietress of a brothel had given him two thousand francs. Not a cautious pimp. His father had cut him off without the usual penny a long time ago. The inspector went on to say they both harped on the fact they had met through me. He understood that. I had no shady past, and by screening themselves with an innocent man they hoped to get off. He wasn't interested in our dealings. What he wanted was the name of the false policeman. I said I hadn't the faintest idea who he was. He said I must have known Yves's friends. I said I only met him three times. Every time he was alone. "You can choose between prison and freedom," the inspector said. "I wish I knew the man," I said. "You refuse to speak. We'll keep you till you speak. And even if you don't know the man you'll make Yves speak if you want to get out."

The police were convinced that Yves was the false policeman's associate, and because the false policeman had shown lots of nerve they were certain he was a notorious gunman, and it would give them kudos to apprehend him. I was led into a room and there was the merchant, and he winked at me. I stated we met because one

of his friends told me I should translate some documents for him for his American affidavit. The merchant nodded. The secretary said, "And why did you introduce Yves to him?" "The merchant had mentioned several times to me how difficult it was to get the exit visa. Yves casually said to me he had friends at the Préfecture. So I introduced them to each other." The merchant looked contented. "So you brought these men together for the purpose of obtaining for one of them an exit visa?" "To facilitate it for him." "That will do."

There was such a triumphant look in the merchant's eye that, dismally, I realized I must have walked into a trap of sorts. Then I was questioned about the false policeman—rather perfunctory questions. Then I was asked if I knew anything about the dollars Yves had spoken of and the merchant denying all knowledge of them. I said I knew nothing of the dollars. So Yves was called in, and he said they had discussed the sale of dollars in my presence. Yves indulged in a lot of nodding and winking, too. But I had had enough of that and maintained that I had heard nothing.

When we had all signed, the secretary told me I was under arrest for trafficking in privileges. "What's that?" I asked aghast. "You introduced a man with the purpose of getting an official to do something he isn't supposed to do." "But I thought . . ." "Tell that to the *juge d'instruction*."

There was much noise in the room, for at another table another case was being examined, and in the hubbub the merchant whispered to me that if I paid him five thousand francs he would straightway get me out. I've been a good bit of a fool, but I'm glad that I didn't obey my first impulse, which was to take the twenty pounds and the couple of thousand francs there were left and give them to him.

The secretary went on to say that as I was Yves's associate in the privilege racket he must consider me his associate in the other offences, too. Hence I was under arrest for three charges: complicity in armed robbery, usurpation of civic power (the false policeman) and *trafic de privilèges*. In a short time I was down in the cell with the noisy latrine.

The guillotine and the stabbed heart were gone from the wall.

I wasn't in the cell for long. Two inspectors came and got Yves and me and took us into a room. One of the inspectors, a huge fellow, held forth to Yves that here was an innocent man who would go to prison for years on account of him, so if there was any decency left in him he should make a clean breast of it and give the name of the false policeman. In that case I could be released immediately and he would get off lightly. Yves smiled. It wasn't the smile he

used to show me. Had I ever seen that smile before I wouldn't have stopped to speak to him in the street. "Don't take me for a fool," he said to the inspector. "You keep me here though I say I'm innocent. Now you want me to say I'm guilty and then you'd let me off lightly? Come on, I'm no fool."

Whereupon the inspector said he would make him talk. He took off his coat and beat Yves long and hard. After a while Yves said, "You're a Corsican, I'm a Corsican, so you know you can't get anything out of me by beating me." The inspector stopped beating him and offered him a glass of beer if Yves gave the name of the false policeman. Not even that tempted him. He was led back to the cell and the inspectors said I looked an intelligent man and surely during the night I could make Yves talk, and if I got the name of the false policeman I would be released at once.

"What about the trafficking in privileges charge?" I asked.

The inspectors said that was just a joke. Against Yves that charge hadn't been formulated, so that showed, too, the police were not bothering about it. All they wanted was the false policeman. The merchant, the inspectors said, was a clever man. By having got in first he made it impossible for Yves to get him in, too, with the dollars. Yves had tried it, but it was too late. They also drew my attention to the fact that both of them had tried to get me in as deep as possible. "You're the victim of two crooks," they said. I thanked them.

Back in the cell, Yves gave me his version of the hold-up. When he and the merchant met in the afternoon the merchant said they had better complete the dollar transaction, the papers would come after. They went to that hotel where the merchant's clients lived. They went into a room and there Yves recognized the woman and man who sat in the *Bar Lafayette* the morning he walked to the lavatory. He didn't like their looks and the room smelt of a trap; the customary trap being that the buyer took the dollars to examine them, to see whether they were genuine and not counterfeit, and then pocket them and leave it to the seller's discretion to grin and forget or to go to the police and see himself in jail, too. Yves said no, and walked out of the room. The merchant followed him down the stairs, trying to persuade him to return. A man walked out of the shadow and showed them a police badge, saying he knew they were black-market racketeers. He shoved them into the first room, which was a bathroom. There he searched them, took a thousand francs from the merchant and twenty dollars from Yves. Then he wanted to go to their respective flats and search them. While he spoke he was pointing a revolver at them. They took a taxi, went

first to Yves's and then to the merchant's. The false policeman put the key of the flat into his pocket, and in the taxi they drove back to the hotel. Yves jumped out of the taxi. One of the grounds of suspicion against him was that the false policeman didn't go after him but said, let him run, I know where to find him. Back at the hotel (this I know from the evidence) the false policeman told the merchant to wait while he telephoned headquarters. The merchant waited and waited and then got suspicious and raced back to his flat. Everything was gone, which meant two suits and some underwear. So it was a real large-scale coup. "And you don't know the man?" I asked. "Of course not," he said.

Of one thing I was sure. The demobilization papers wouldn't be mentioned. As far as the rest was concerned it shouldn't be difficult for me to convince the judge that I was neither a trafficker of privileges nor an accessory to two suits and three pants. But I was deadly sick at the thought that I was mixed up with such a crowd. I was very grateful that neither Nona nor Dodo and not even Cooky could see me in that crew.

Yves went to great lengths trying to persuade me that I should mention the dollars to the *juge d'instruction*. It was important to get the merchant in, too. But by then my plan was made; anyway I wasn't going to make a repetition of the exit visa. Upstairs at the anthropometry I was asked in the usual way if this was my first visit to the *Evêché*. I said it wasn't. They read out my particulars and showed me my photograph, and I said, yes, I was married, and the rest of it was correct, too.

At the Palais de Justice I was put into the cell of the naked woman. A bit matured by this time, she sat astride the gloom. Because it was Sunday no judge was in before six o'clock in the evening. Yves was convinced the judge would release me and gave me many messages to his pals outside; but I knew I couldn't escape without going back to *Chaves*. There was a man among us who was in for having taken money from an English officer to get him out of France; the rest were thieves and foreigners deep in the black market. At six o'clock I came before the judge, a white-haired old man, and told him I wanted to be released at once.

"Wait," he said. "I'm waiting for the police to finish the investigation." He was like ice, but polite.

Then we were on our way to *Chaves*, and Yves suddenly declared he hated going back. We undressed and dressed, and because I wasn't a tyro any more I hid my twenty pounds inside my trousers, pinning them below the knee. One of the warders said to me that he was surprised to see me back, but that was the result of fre-

quenting people you knew in prison. I said he was quite right. In general, the prisoners who knew me beforehand said I was a fool and must beware that Yves and the merchant shouldn't make a bigger fool of me. Yves was disliked, and they said it was a shame how he let me down. But one of the Corsican warders, whose job was to allot the permanent cells, told me I had got a fellow Corsican into trouble, and so he put me into a cell where there was no latrine, only the stench of the tin can. A tall, cadaverous Algerian asked me as I came in what it was like in the outside world. "No better than here," I answered, and with that answer I summed up the six weeks of freedom I was leaving behind. The other two occupants of the cell were foreigners, too. One was a Spaniard, a young chap accused of stealing a hen. Later he got a year for the hen. His first sentence. The other was a Polish bricklayer, who had wandered from country to country, in and out of prisons.

"There's something in my heart that drives me to prison," he said. He had a kindly, innocent, fair head and a fair beard and you couldn't mention a country without him butting in and saying, "Oh, Switzerland? You get cheese there twice a week. Belgium? There's a wireless in every cell. *Chaves* is the worst in the world. The *Santé* in Paris is much better." He took off his shirt and ran his palms down the shirt and now and then his hands stopped and a cracking sound followed. His face lit up with satisfaction. "What's that?" I asked. "Lice," he said. "Plenty of lice here. There were no lice in Stockholm."

What did I care for Stockholm? I saw my first louse in the afternoon. It ran out of my shirt cuff and as I tried to catch it I wondered to what green altars all this was leading me.

I pin down 13th February as the lowest day of my life. Covered with lice, I lay near the stench of the can on an incredibly dirty palliasse. Nothing to smoke, for to stop the cigarette racket, which since food was cut down in *Chaves* had taken on gigantic proportions, you could buy only one packet every second day. It seemed to me I was lost, all the elements and pains of this world had allied themselves against me. Even the German artillery had rattled down the Boulevard de Clichy but to hurt me. Easily I could stay for a year or longer in prison if the false policeman wasn't found. Last time there had been a man whom the judge kept detained for seventeen months and let out only when the real culprit turned up. And it was so degrading. The crusader rolling in the gutter. Clouds of self-pity gathered on the horizon ready to burst. I got up,

borrowed a cigarette from the Algerian and began to pace the cell, taking great care not to kick or upset the can. Self-pity, I sternly told myself, was a pleasant pastime if you sat in a comfortable arm-chair and a nice log fire was burning before you. But in *Chaves*, and still so far from England, it wasn't good enough.

"You'll get tired if you walk so fast," the man with the heart for prisons said. I walked faster.

This was rock bottom. Nothing could hurt me any more. I went back to *Chaves* because I hadn't shaken it off when I came out. My fear fascinated my fate, and my fascinated fate drove me back. I believe that was true. But, I said to myself, I'll get out and get to England. Then I looked at my fascinated fate from a practical point of view. I had already seen a lawyer. He was Mathieu's lawyer. Yves had tried to persuade me to take his lawyer. I wanted, however, to dissociate myself completely from Yves. My lawyer was half-English, quite a young man and was a rising light among Marseilles lawyers. I told him everything from the start. He said there was no case against me, and I needn't fear the demobilization papers should leak out. With the papers gone I would surely get out. The privilege business was a joke, an excuse of the police to arrest me. His only fear was that my detention would drag on, for with the wave of crime, black marketing and arresting people galore, the *juges* were so overwhelmed with work that each case had to wait its turn, and that could mean weeks. As I walked up and down I decided that it was with the merchant, however I loathed him, that I must side and not with Yves. How far Yves was involved I couldn't guess. Since he was in prison he contradicted himself so often and had adopted such a cynical attitude that I didn't know where I was with him. The door opened and a warder shouted that I should go down to the lawyers' room.

My lawyer was there and he told me the false policeman had been arrested, had made a full confession and that he had planned the hold-up with Yves. This is what the false policeman said: On the morning I introduced Yves to the merchant, Yves came to see him and told him he was going to meet that afternoon a man who would buy dollars from him. He was to follow them. Once in the hotel he was to wait and then burst into the room saying he was a policeman and confiscate the money and anything else he found there. So a hitch must have occurred and the whole thing misfired, which wasn't surprising considering the false policeman was a boy of twenty and it was his first expedition into hold-ups, though he had been thrice convicted for cat burglary. The police and the judge had asked him if he knew me. He said he didn't. So that was that.

"They must release me," I said.

"When the judge summons you, you'll be a free man," the lawyer said.

I hoped that would be but a matter of few days. I had to wait five weeks before the judge sent for me.

Yves continued to deny he knew the young crook. The crook arrived at *Chaves* and Yves was livid because he took his lawyer. They saw a lot of each other and I believe their meetings were stormy. My final conclusion was that Yves probably wanted to get hold of the papers and sell them to us, and when the merchant, hungry for more profit, had spoken to him of the dollars he may have wanted to get the equivalent of the dollars, too. But one thing appeared pretty certain to me. Stealing silver watches, some thousand francs and a few suits and handkerchiefs had been the twenty-year-old boy's independent action. The old lags, connoisseurs of every type of crime, were of the same opinion, adding that this was a case of the slip-up on account of the youth and ignorance of the parties involved; and because they were up against a craftier crook.

Now I examined the men around me more realistically; the rosy Dick Turpin cloud had lifted. Romance and adventure didn't exist in their midst. The most surprising thing about them was their utter ignorance of their work. They slipped up as a rule because of childish mistakes. Yves and the false policeman were no exceptions. They were the rule itself.

There were in *Chaves* at that time two professional crooks, old hands and proud of their cunning. Though strewn with lice they went about in silk pyjamas. They were whoremasters, and one night they had walked into a brothel where their joint girl had worked and told the lady of the house she owed them one thousand francs. She refused to pay, so one of them held a revolver against her while the other went through her bag and pockets. The *sous-maîtresse*, hearing shrieks, rushed in; they clouted her and then calmly swaggered out, went home and were hurt and surprised when they were arrested.

There was a more surprising case of the naïveté of the dealers in crime. Some racketeers bought in secret several million francs' worth of coffee. The coffee was to be delivered by lorry at a certain time. When the lorry arrived at the destination, gunmen, belonging to another gang, were waiting for it and they forced the driver to drive elsewhere. They beat up the driver, and he then went and squealed on both parties. When the police arrived on the scene the coffee was gone, for a member of the second gang had double-crossed his partners and in the still of the night had gone

off with the lorry. So now the whole crowd squealed on him, and by the time the coffee was found more than a dozen men were hurt and surprised to find themselves in *Chaves*, awaiting stiff sentences.

The squealing business was the most surprising. My false policeman had given Yves away, and had blackened him more than truth demanded because the police had tried out on him the old trick of saying that Yves had given him away. It was squealing and squealing: practically every man in *Chaves* was there because an associate had given him away.

The most terrible and the most disgusting thing about the men of the underworld was the way they treated those of us who had but one aim: to go on with the war against the enemy of God and man. Every day there arrived Frenchmen, Belgians, Poles and Czechs, done in and betrayed by the Marseilles crooks. There was, for instance, a small batch of men of different Allied nationalities who chartered a sailing vessel for a huge sum from these *chevaliers de la lune*. A motor launch came to collect them to take them out to their ship. The launch deposited them on a barren rock outside the harbour of Marseilles, and the poor fellows were glad when the police launch discovered them: at least, they could get some water and bread.

As bad as the crooks, if not worse, were the foreign racketeers and black-market men. They were mostly recruited among Central and Eastern Europeans. They sold counterfeit dollars and pounds, sham gold bars, false ration cards, oil, sardines, sugar and everything else that meant quick gain and meant more misery for the French. They all knew my diamond merchant, and their opinion of him was unfavourable. They declared they gave him a wide berth. Coming from such authority I mildly reflected I must have been rather a sucker.

It's not without interest to record that a good eighty per cent of the Marseilles crooks were of foreign origin. Scarcely any of them came from the north and centre of France.

There was one Austrian refugee whom I liked. His was a sad tale. He managed to get a false passport with fake Brazilian and French exit visas. It cost him a fortune. His girl friend had sold him to the police. Her explanation was that the police had promised her a genuine exit visa if she got a few fellow refugees into trouble. So she started on the man who kept her. I was sorry for that man, for he stood prison badly and even in prison he was being robbed right and left.

It was now a very different *Chaves* from the one I had known. There was almost no food in prison. The bread ration had been cut

down by half. One hundred and fifty grams of bread was all the prisoner got. There had been a mutiny when the bread ration was cut down, and it took place during my six weeks' absence. It was typical of *Chaves*, hence worth recording. The word went from cell to cell that as a sign of revolt against the dire starvation facing them, after the afternoon walk they wouldn't return to their cells but stay in a body in the courtyard. All and sundry were warned not to flinch. Their only hope lay in unity. When the walk was over and the warder shouted they should go in nobody moved. So far so good; but the warder rang the alarm-bell and other warders, armed with sticks, came out, and one of them shouted to the brave men in the courtyard that anyone who didn't get moving would be put into the *cachot* for a month. They went back to their cells like lambs. But that wasn't enough for their manly souls: they denounced the ringleaders, who got a month of *cachot* each.

As well as in bread, there was a cut in lentils, beans and rice. In their place came *rutabaga* and *topinambours*. *Rutabaga* is a sort of inferior mangel-wurzel. It was tried on pigs without success before the war. It had no nutritive value and was vile. *Topinambours* are Jerusalem artichokes, and you couldn't fill your belly with them. In lukewarm water a few of these horrors were our only food. About eight hundred men were literally starving, and their only thought was food. Naturally, a dirty racket sprang up in which certain members of the prison staff were involved.

To begin with, the chief warder forbade food parcels to be sent in, his contention was that tools for escape might thus be smuggled in. Anyway, it made starvation more complete. But the prisoners employed in the bookkeeping department, ably led by the banker, worked out a racket. They were in touch with the outer world, and as a result of their connections, they sold you a small rissole for fifty francs and a supple little steak went for one hundred francs. The prisoners trafficked, too. They sold their bread for cigarettes, or cigarettes for bread. I myself, who am a heavy smoker, used to sell half my mean ration of bread for a packet of cigarettes. The bookkeepers' racket reached dizzy heights. Now and then there was a vacancy on the prison staff, and the Austrian whom I pitied paid a thousand francs for one of those vacancies. Two days later he was back in his cell. The only part I took in the business was to pay a hundred francs to get into a cell with a running latrine.

In that cell there was a queer assortment of people. First the *légionnaire*. He was an elderly man, but tough, very tough. He did physical jerks every morning, though he was two months in prison. He was good with lice and ate only half of his bread in the morning;

a heroic action. He was in for having been pinched with black-market soap. He didn't give away the man he worked for, hence the man sent him money every week. He narrated one long night a master-coup of his. In a large café on the Canebière, two well-known black-market foreigners sat at a table next to his. He understood German, so he listened to them. They were going to make a deal in dollars in the afternoon, in the usual way of one putting the dollars into an envelope and the other putting the francs into another envelope and passing them across under the table. The café was continuously watched by the police, hence the under-table touch. Tables were very close to each other in that café. The *légionnaire* turned up in the afternoon with a friend. The racketeers were sitting at the next table. They put their hands, with the envelopes, under the table and slowly extended their hands. Both envelopes were gently taken out of the hands and as the *légionnaire* and his pal rose there still was an expectant gleam in the eyes of the traders. The *légionnaire* watched them from the door. After a little while the traders began to whisper fiercely, each accusing the other of having double-crossed him. The *légionnaire* went but looked in an hour later. Their faces were purple and furious whispering was still going on.

Before the war the *légionnaire*, who spoke a little English, was a guide to brothels and pornographic cinemas. His clients were mostly officers and civil servants returning from India and the Somerset Maugham country: while the Empire builders waited for the overland express he acted as entertainer to them. It amused me when the *légionnaire* went before the tribunal and said in his defence that the war had ruined his honest peace-time work and that was the reason he entered the black market. Taking into consideration his hard-working past, the president gave him two months with the *sursis*.

Then there was in the cell Marcel, a Breton, quite mad; he used to wait at the door an hour before the *rutabaga* arrived. When the key turned in the lock he jumped forward as though ready to charge all the *rutabaga* of our benighted world. He considered himself a great gentleman and often spoke of the gentle life he led. He was mysterious and wouldn't tell us why he was in. He was a hotbed of lice. He slept beside me and I couldn't cope with the lice of both of us.

"*Putain de ta race*," said the *légionnaire*, speaking to Georges. It was just to say something. If you had nothing to say you insulted Georges.

Georges had already been in *Chaves* since November. He looked a

typical German and said he was Alsatian—nobody believed that. One night he confessed to me he was a German. His was an interesting case. He was a Rhineland industrialist, and when the Nazis came to power he decided he didn't like them. He turned against them with German thoroughness. Much bickering went on between him and the Party of which his father was a pillar; one day he had had enough, left Germany and rebuilt his factory in France. With equal German thoroughness he mastered the French language and tried to make a Frenchman of himself. He didn't succeed. Because he enormously interested me, I made him speak of his daily life in Paris. It was work, reading, and work again. Now and then he went out and then under-tipped the taxi-driver and thought the restaurant charged too much. When the war broke out Hitler offered an amnesty to all Germans who had been against the Party. Georges was in Switzerland on business. It was a hard struggle to make up his mind. He made it up, went back to Paris and volunteered for the French Army. He was shoved into some labour corps, and though he, who had spent his youth in a German hussar regiment, felt keenly the degradation of it, in his spare time even evolved a plan for combating magnetic mines and sent his invention to the Admiralty in London. He never got a reply. His pick-and-shovel brigade was at Nimes when the collapse came, then he went to Marseilles, and there he made himself a false French passport: that, he thought, was his only hope if the Germans took Unoccupied France. He had clever hands. Another German refugee went to him, complaining that he would be lost, too. Georges's clever hands produced another French passport. The refugee, in order to get well in with the police, went and denounced Georges. Now he was already four months in prison.

He was intensely disliked. The *légionnaire* and Marcel and the others during our walks called him every name under the sun. Nasty names and a nasty sun. He didn't answer back, but wooed our friendship, and at times would hold forth in a professorial voice on *Kameradschaft* that should have existed in the cell and should have included him, too. There hardly was a man I knew who had more to lose by a German victory than he. Yet he was certain Germany would win the war. That was her destiny: she had the best army, the best tanks, the best planes and the best minds. A German victory would have been his complete annihilation: I know he would have been squashed to death under the Panzers, happy in his German heart. Queer: but so it would have been.

He exaggerated every German victory. The Greeks? Well, the Greeks would be beaten the moment Germany intervened. It was

out of the question for England to win the war. "America is coming in some day," I said. He had his answer ready. "She'll come in too late. She isn't ready." He would quote figures proving how far behind Germany English and American production was. A dictatorship, he opined, could only be defeated by dictatorial methods. Democracy was unfit for it. Look how slow Congress was about the Lease-and-Lend Bill. "I know," I said, "there must be plenty of inefficiency in England. I know that for a long time the English are going to be licked wherever they turn, I know the old school tie will be pretty colourless before this war is over, and the famous blue arse of the Briton will be blue from kicks, but England is going to win because of her moral courage, the stoical heroism of her people and because decency is on her side." He would shake his head.

In a commiserating voice, pronouncing every 'b' as 'p', he sketched the invasion that would come in the Spring. Paratroops would get hold of aerodromes and railway junctions. With coastal batteries and Stukas the Germans would make the Channel too hot for the Navy. "You can't invade England as long as there's a navy." "Navy? What could a navy do with its bases in German hands? Shell Portsmouth in German hands from the sea?"

I was full of lice, my lice and the lice of Marcel. I scratched and scratched. I was starved. I was in prison associating with infantile crooks. And this man saw the Germans in Portsmouth. I feebly rose from my palliasse and lurched towards him and hit his sagging, hungry jaw with my emaciated fist. Then I swayed to and fro, waiting for him to hit me back. But when there's no sergeant behind a German his fighting spirit leaves him; when alone the German remembers he comes from the land of poets and thinkers. Georges didn't hit me back, he took pen and paper and wrote to the chief warder, denouncing me for having hit him. That would have meant a fortnight's *cachot* for me. But the *légionnaire* and Marcel told him they would certify that I never left my palliasse. Georges sighed, tore up the letter and next day we were back at our discussions again. He was painfully honest: with himself, too. I asked him if the propaganda of German political refugees about Nazis and the peace-loving German people were true. He called it rubbish.

"Imagine England wins the war," I said, "imagine the confidence trick of 1918 is repeated and there comes a second Weimar. . . . No, not even that. Imagine Germany defeated and a sincere German Socialist taking over the reins. A peace-loving anti-Nazi German, The door opens and an officer walks in. He introduces himself as

General Oberst von Gewehr. What would the anti-militarist, peace-loving Socialist do?"

"Jump up, click his heels, and beg the *General Oberst* to take his seat." I nodded.

Georges had put into the ageless nutshell the final conclusion of the Montmartre *Maler*. Germany would have to be disarmed and militarily and politically kept down for at least two generations to learn to think and act in other terms than those of war and world domination by the sword. Let them produce all the poets and all the thinkers they neglected to produce for a long time. New Beethovens and Goethes should arise and get all the freedom they wanted, but without arms and without any sort of organization that could make steel grow again on the congenial German soil.

They went too far and they must be chastised. In the first war the miracle of the Marne saved Paris, in this war the miracle of Dunkerque saved London; in the next one probably the miracle of Montreal would save Washington; but what about the war after that one? It definitely wasn't good enough.

One warm day in March Georges went before the tribunal. He got permission to wear a black suit of his and striped trousers. The suit hung on him, the stiff white collar let a lot of air down his back, yet he looked imposing in his worthy effort to look like a worthy descendant of Siegfried. He returned in the afternoon a little more cadaverous-looking and told us he got eight months and the refugee who had given him away was acquitted. He broke down and swore he would never do anything illegal again. This was in answer to my suggestion that when he served his sentence he would have to do something desperate to get out of France, where, surely, a concentration camp awaited him.

"If I get out," I said on that, "I'll murder, if necessary, but I shall try again to get to England. Even if it means risking *Chaves* again."

Undoubtedly starved as I was, my vitality was returning.

Starvation, or rather a fearful longing for food, was with us like the lice and the dirt. At night I dreamed of eating. As a lover goes over in his mind the lanes and moons he and his beloved have visited together, so my mind roamed through the good feeds I had in a previous existence. I wouldn't start with the meal at once: suspense gave it more flavour. If I wished to lunch at the *Réserve* in Beaulieu I would start getting into a red bus of the Littoral in Nice, then a few cocktails at the *Bristol Bar*, and though my wolfish mind was chasing me on, I would take my time before finding myself before the flaming *Loup de Mer*. Our talk in the cell was of food.

Talk kept us awake late into the night. Marcel's father had kept a restaurant in Nantes. Our minds often feasted on *Saucisses au vin blanc*. He reeled off tantalizing bills of fare. We travelled over France on gastronomical wings. Paris? The real *châteaubriant* at the *Cochon d'Or*. At Nevers? *Le filet bleu*. And so on till we reached *Grenouilles Provençales*.

"I could eat now a *selle de veau à l'Orloff*," Marcel said, "all cream and cucumbers."

"Give me," I said, "a guinea-fowl cooked with partridges, such as I've eaten at Anneçy."

The *légionnaire* lifted his head from his palliasse. "What about a stew? A *ragoût aux pommes?*" We were disgusted. "What vulgar taste you have," I said. "A stew. A stew, indeed!" "Vulgar? What would you give if now somebody gave you a nice steaming plate of stew?" I considered the question. "Five years of my life," I said.

Marcel was released middle of March. He went to the houses of the better-off prisoners where he said he was a warder, and if they paid him well he would take food parcels along for the starving husbands and sons. He made hay for a week, was caught, and returned to *Chaves*.

I had noticed a very tall man with ginger hair and spectacles: he towered above the others. We found an opportunity to talk, and he said he was a Scot. We got friendly, and he told me he was accused of being a British spy. A few days later he came to me in the courtyard and said the French were handing him over to the Germans; they were taking him away that day, and that would be the end of him. He took it well and said he had had his fun and he had been expecting that, and there was nothing to stop it. I was distressed, and asked him if I could do anything for him. It sounded rather foolish. He said he had no family and he had no message for the outer world. He wistfully said he wished he could see Edinburgh again. "God bless you," I fervently said, as we parted. "I need it," he said.

In March it was getting warmer and lice and bed-bugs were having the time of their lives; and I was still waiting to see the judge; my lawyer said he urged the judge every time he went to see him; but there were too many cases on. Of Yves I saw nothing. He had been transferred to the second division, but now and then sent me messages, always trying to persuade me to say I heard him and the merchant speaking of dollars. But I had already chosen my line of action. I sent a message through a more or less reliable released

fellow prisoner to the merchant that I couldn't afford to get even a day's *sursis* for trafficking in privileges. Therefore, if he didn't help me at the confrontation, I was prepared to tell the whole truth about the demobilization papers, even if it meant suffering a heavy sentence. Without my knowing it, another influence was working in my favour. The merchant ran to the police not so much in white fury but to forestall any unpleasant developments. Being an underworldly wise fox, he must have decided to get everybody in before anybody could turn on his shady affairs. Yves and I weren't enough: his pal, the lawyer, knew of the papers, too. So he went for him, trying to get him in with us. But the lawyer was no fool; moreover, he was a man of experience. He hit back, telling him he didn't mind going to jail but the merchant would follow and the whole past of the merchant would be brought up and that would make the merchant stay in for donkey's years. And, which was decent of him, he told him he must get me out, otherwise he would squeal on him, too. So when, about 15th March, we faced each other before the judge, it was a subdued merchant of diamonds, non-existing demobilization papers and nebulous dollars that sat opposite me.

It was a warm Spring day. In the cool cellar of the Palais de Justice I met the false policeman. He looked like a joke; the pantomime crook. Low forehead, hat pulled over the eyes, and the rest of it. He was proud of himself. He told me it was on the Canebière that he ran into the merchant who then called the police. I modestly suggested to him that having been so cautious as to walk about the Canebière a few days after the hold-up wouldn't it be wiser if after serving his sentence he gave up crookedness as a vocation? He thought he had been clever and would be cleverer in the future. I also asked him why he used a policeman's badge and a revolver. That was tautology. He countered he fancied himself in the simultaneous task of police and hold-up man. I sadly shook my head.

Before the judge he was going to recant. He intended to say, which I believe was true, that he did know Yves and knew he was meeting the merchant, but the robbery was his own independent work. In the corridor there was normal sunshine and normal light; that made me dizzy. But in the judge's room the shades were drawn and that was better. The judge questioned me about the visa, and I said that all I thought was that Yves who knew someone at the Prefecture, might save the merchant from waiting too long in the queue. The merchant corroborated that. Not a word was asked about Yves and the false policeman. The merchant was like a dove. The whole situation looked as though I were an uninterested witness, who was losing an hour or so of his time by having to come

and give evidence. Nothing to remind me that I was already five weeks and two days back in the hell of *Chaves*. Then the gendarme led me back to the cell. Yves and the crook went next. Yves later said the judge didn't believe them. So it would be the *Correctionel* for both of them. The Black Maria took us home to *Chaves*.

Chaves always had a fine crop of men who worked in the docks. They came in for theft or smuggling. Without exception they told me that in the port of Marseilles German arms were loaded on ships going to French North Africa. Tanks in cases labelled agricultural machinery, guns, munitions, and even soldiers, too. Nobody learned more to discount prison tales than I, but I had to believe them because they all told the same story and because they had no earthly interest in inventing such a tale. Anyway, the German counter-attack in Libya bore out their words.

The 29th March was hot, and the lice frolicked in the sunshine nicely sliced by the bars. I was called to the lawyers' room and stood outside in the queue, waiting to get to my lawyer. It was nearly a fortnight since I saw the judge, and I didn't know where I was. A prisoner employed in the office came to me and said that Yves asked me to go to see his lawyer with a message.

"What are you talking about?" I asked. "We're making up your account in the office. Your *non-lieu* has arrived." "I don't believe you," I said.

Then my lawyer called me in. I asked if he had any news for me. As far as he knew, the judge was still browsing over the case. Don't worry, I said to myself, I'm immune against false hopes. A warder looked in.

"Oh, you're here?" he said to me. "Go and get your things, you're going." A bearded prisoner, who was in for false pound notes, said to me, "Ach, now you looks excited." My lawyer had gone to the office and came back. "You are free," he said. "The charge against you is washed out." Then he added, "It's time. You look like death."

I struggled up to my cell, got my things, and in no time was in the office, where they searched me for the last time, and the chief warder said, "Be careful, and don't come back for the third time." I went out. The chief warder's words were with me. Most things come thrice. I went to the pub across the road, for I was in no hurry this time, and had a drink. I remembered the chief warder hadn't returned my ration book. I went back to get it. The warder at the gate told me to wait. The iron door was open and walking up and down I made a couple of steps into the prison. A warder who was standing near called to me to get out; nobody was allowed into the

prison. My ration card arrived, and as I walked away I said to myself that I had been for the third time in *Chaves*, and as I said that the fear and fascination fell away. Very much battered, yet I knew I could count on myself again. I went to have a bath. There are no mirrors in prison and in the baths I looked at my face and there seemed hardly anything left of it. In the water I stared at the collection of tooth-picks and should have felt sorry for myself. But I was happy: I was getting rid of the lice. There was a weighing machine in the baths. My weight was just under eight stone. I went to eat. I could hardly eat, but I forced myself to eat. I was sleepy, but stayed out till midnight. I didn't dream of *Chaves*. I woke up once in the night.

"And now for England," I said, and slept on.

A SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

On the Place de la Préfecture, near the statue of Barthou and King Alexander, which was still covered with the flowers thousands of Marseillais had brought along when Yugoslavia entered the war, was the *Pelican Bar*, where the Anglo-American colony congregated. There I met a pleasant Texan with whom I stayed for some time. There was also an Englishman I knew from Paris; but he didn't want to go to England.

"I'm a good chemist," he said, "so they'll put me into the infantry. My feet are bad: another reason to put me into the infantry." He wouldn't mind going to Canada. As a matter of fact, he went to Nice. There was a Canadian at the *Pelican*, an elderly man, and he introduced me to four Belgian airmen, and they were as keen as I to get to England. One of them, a short, Jack-in-the-box sort of fellow, looking like a Spaniard, seemed to have established himself as their leader. His father had been a hero of the last war. By trade he was a wealthy fishmonger of Bruxelles. He considered himself an aristocrat among men. He was proud of his table manners and often held forth on them. His name was Pierre, and he knows I shall never forget him. The next in command was Albert, a young man of Liège, whom Pierre financed: he was a good sort. He had the unpleasant habit of imitating at every opportunity a very large, hot-swing Negro band. If there were no opportunities he created them. The other two I knew less; one of them, I believe, wanted to get to England because he was keen on doing business on the Stock Exchange. Pierre was full of vague plans. I examined them and told him it would be better to rob or steal and go like that to *Chaves*. He worried the life out of me by continually speaking of a certain organization clandestinely run by the English and Gaullists. It was in Marseilles: he heard that before he left Bruxelles. The other three nodded and said they had heard of it, too.

"Good Lord," I said. Through the open door of the *Pelican* the Scots spy, whom I had buried near a German wall, strode into the bar. "Is it your ghost, or what?" I asked, getting up. "Don't speak to me, it's dangerous," he whispered, and stalked past me. He had a drink at the bar, looked confused and went out. I spoke to the barman. He knew him: he was a Swede, who had lived for some time in England, was something of a crook and had been detained for a forged cheque; he was quite well known in

Marseilles. I thanked the barman for the information and went out.

It was a sunny morning in mid-April. Outside the American Consulate a long queue was waiting. Faces eager with fear, full of hope to get away and to watch in safety the men, women and children of Britain fighting and dying for their safety. You couldn't hear a word of French in that queue. "Turning their back on their European destiny," I said half aloud. But what did they care about Europe and its destiny?

The V campaign was in full swing. On the walls, forests of V's were chalked beside the Croix de Lorraine. I admire the Croix de Lorraine. It stands for all that's fine in France and the French people. On a wall was the legend, '*A mort Darlan.*' The posters quoted the Maréchal promising many things, like return to the land and solving the employer and worker problem: with posters, I supposed. At the bottom of the Canebière I ran into a grey-haired gentleman whom I knew from *Chaves*; a minor embezzler he was. He stopped me.

"I imagine you know what I was doing in *Chaves*," he said. "I just had a look round. You surely heard that I am the second in command of the Intelligence Service. Give me a cigarette." "Had you said you were the chief of the Intelligence Service I'd have given you a cigar."

I walked on and reflected that in the last war you saw a spy in your neighbour, in this war you saw a spy in yourself. Near the water I bumped into Norbert. His name wasn't Norbert: he had many names; his real name I never found out. He was in *Chaves* during my first period. He wasn't a crook, he was the tight-rope walker on the borderline of business and fraud. Before the war he worked with the tourist Mark and smuggled bonds from France into Switzerland. Lately he was getting *permits de séjour* for any client who paid a small sum, which he shared with a friend at the Prefecture. As befitted a man of his kidney, he had a horror of crooks, and had often warned me not to speak to them: the crooks, on the other hand, despised him thoroughly. He was a man without a single conviction. We talked.

"You know Marseilles inside out," I said. "Tell me, honestly, have you ever heard of a Gaullist organization that sends people to Gibraltar?" He shook his head.

"No," he said. "Personally, I wouldn't touch a thing like that. I don't want to go to prison for a serious offence." I said it was a pity, casually adding that it wasn't only for me, but for four Belgian

pilots, too. We parted, he raising his green hat in an old-world manner. Never trust men with green hats.

Two days later a woman came to my hotel and said Norbert had important news for me, and I should meet him at a bar near the Canebière; she had an open modest smile. Norbert took me aside in the bar and said that he knew where the Gaullist organization was to be found. In fact, he was in touch with them.

"Not so quickly," he said. "I don't get myself involved in such dangerous matters just for the fun of it. I want money for it. Not from you. You're a friend. But from the Belgians. I don't want much. I'm not one of your fifty thousand francs crooks. Two thousand francs from each and only payable after they'd been signed on, and if they find the organization satisfactory." That sounded fair enough. He would be seeing a certain French cavalry captain, who was one of the organizers. "If you double-cross me," I said, "I don't mind going back to *Chaves*, but you'll come with me. I'm no longer a beginner."

"You're mad," he said. "Only you could double-cross me."

I went to see the Belgians. Pierre was delighted. The man interested in the Stock Exchange said that he was an officer, and if anything happened to him there were in Marseilles plenty of Belgian officers to avenge him. I contended that I wanted to get out, but I didn't want to eat *rutabaga* again; so we should watch our steps. I saw Norbert in the evening and he was perspiring and told me the captain had put him through his paces and now he wished he hadn't tackled this affair; it wasn't in his line. He liked little harmless affairs but not things like that. What about the Belgians? Were they to be trusted? How did I know they weren't *mouchards*? If they were, the Gaullists would kill him. He shuddered. Eventually he suggested meeting one of them; but only one. So I went and saw the Belgians and Pierre immediately volunteered to meet Norbert. The meeting was theatrical: I felt like laughing. Norbert exhorted Pierre to be careful, and then we fixed a date for the following day, at two in the afternoon.

"We shouldn't do that," Pierre whispered. "At two in the afternoon I go every day to the *Bar-Tabac* in the Place de Rome, and it would arouse suspicion if I changed my habits." I roared with laughter. As if anybody cared about his habits. He was hurt. He said he was so careful that he wouldn't dream of drinking a *marc* with his coffee since it was his habit to have a brandy with it. Later he wrote my telephone number on a piece of paper. He assured me there was no cause to worry, because if the police caught him he would swallow that paper.

At our next meeting Norbert brought the final plan. The Gaullist organization was ready to send any Belgian to Gibraltar provided he had seen active service and was less than thirty years old. Pierre gave the age of Albert as twenty-six, which was true, his own as twenty-eight, which wasn't, and then got upright about the stockbroker and put him down as thirty-one. Pierre was thirty-four.

"That man won't be accepted," Norbert said. That made rather a good impression on me, since he was getting two thousand francs for each of them, the more the merrier should have been his motto. We were to meet next day, the four Belgians, Norbert and I, at three in the afternoon. We were to meet the Gaullist captain. Pierre thought he could see the rock of Gibraltar before him. I, for one, distinctly saw a stinking can before me.

"If any dirt comes of this," I said to the assembled Belgians next afternoon, "I promise you each of you will get twice as heavy a sentence as I." They were impressed. I idly wondered how I could achieve that. As I knew my luck of late, it would be the other way round. Norbert and I had arranged that, while I was up at the captain's place, his girl, whom none of them knew, would be watching them. If she saw any monkey business she was to come and tell us, thus giving us time to get away. I told Pierre that two men would be watching them, and if anybody went out of the café or telephoned I would know at once. Pierre went one better, and told his comrades that armed Gaullists would be watching them, and if any of them moved they would be shot. So the Belgians sat like statues, and Pierre's eyes roamed right and left. Anybody watching us would have thought there was a gang ready to burst with crime and sub-machine-guns. Norbert came and took the youngest member of the party, a regular officer, and they went off. They returned in twenty minutes. The young man was pale with excitement.

"He's been accepted," Norbert said. "Now, what do you think of the captain?" The young man said the captain was a smart person and had made an excellent impression on him. He was ready to pay the two thousand francs to Norbert. Norbert had told them not to mention before the captain that he was getting money. I went next. "I told him you were English," Norbert said. We went into a house, up some stairs, and Norbert rang the bell; a light went on, a spy-hole opened, and then I was in a kitchen, and through the kitchen we went into a small office, where we were received by a short, middle-aged man. I didn't think much of him and didn't cherish his accent, and though he didn't give me the impression of a crook,

he certainly did not impress me as a cavalry captain. He took my name and later gave assurances of my reaching Gibraltar. I asked how and when: he would let me know in a few days. Norbert was perspiring profusely.

"If this man is a captain," I said to Norbert when we came out, "then I'm buying a green hat like yours. Never mind. We'll be in the same cell and we'll play belotte." Norbert got annoyed; he said my scepticism was driving him mad. He asked me not to go back to the café, but meet him at the bar, his headquarters, an hour later. I went there and found him and his girl friend and the Belgians drinking a sort of farewell toast; only the candidate for the Stock Exchange was in a lachrymose mood and called Pierre a cad for having given his real age, forgetful that he, Pierre, was thirty-four years old. I asked Pierre if Norbert had been paid. He said yes, he had paid him.

That night I rather damped Pierre's enthusiasm by telling him that this was the last we should see of Norbert. Next day was Pierre's day of victory, for Norbert and his girl turned up and, what is more, invited him out to lunch. Pierre and Norbert became bosom pals and sneered at me in unison for my lack of faith. Thursday night Pierre spent the remnants of his money on a dinner he gave in Norbert's honour. By midnight Pierre was convinced that the Admiralty would send a submarine to fetch us: Albert thought the same: Norbert mysteriously said 'Wait and see.' Champagne flowed.

Friday followed Thursday, and the happy little family that we were lunched together, and to my surprise I beheld the captain, dressed in a worker's blue overalls, come into the bar and make Norbert a sign. Norbert jumped up and ran to the bar.

"I knew he'd come," Pierre said in a superior voice. "Now, how did you know that?" Then Pierre had to confess he had been the night before to the captain's house where they had a long talk. "You went behind my back," I said. "I don't mind. But now it's going to be mighty easy for them to do us in." Norbert returned, the captain vanished. Norbert said I was leaving that very night, the others would follow Monday. "Why was he in overalls?" I asked. "Do you want him to walk around with the Cross of Lorraine tattooed on his forehead?" Pierre thought that ought to squash me. The others thought so, too. Notwithstanding his utter stupidity, I did have a kind of sneaking liking for Pierre. The man had left his wife and two children behind to go and die for his country. Albert had run away from a prisoners' camp in Germany.

"I'm not going without them," I said. Norbert explained that as

I was considered an Englishman they wanted to get me away first. I remained adamant. I would go with them. If they went Monday, then I could go, too.

"Of course they're going Monday," Norbert said. But he was nervous and annoyed.

To make amends for his independent action, Pierre related to me his interview with the captain, who despite repeated urging, refused to take the stockbroker. That, I admitted, spoke in his favour. I was almost certain that Norbert was genuine. He was so nervous, and now and then he frankly confessed he wished he had had nothing to do with the whole thing. Anyway, Pierre and the others trusted them. I didn't fancy my rôle of kill-sport just because I had been done in before. Pierre was becoming quite the boss.

Norbert wasn't wasting his time. He was busy with his usual business the whole day long. I was witness to large sums being given to him and he returned on the tick with the dollars or francs, as the case might be. I saw a man giving him four thousand dollars and within half an hour he was back with hundreds of thousands of francs. He told me an astonishing tale: on second consideration it wasn't. There were thousands, if not millions, of counterfeit pounds and dollars in circulation in Marseilles, and the police, though they arrested many, were unable to trace their origin. These didn't come from Switzerland, as it was whispered in *Chaves*, but from further afield: they came from Germany.

When I went for the second time to *Chaves*, while Wavell's offensive was at its height, the black-market stock exchange paid two hundred and sixty francs for a pound: now, with Rommel on the move, it was just above a hundred.

Saturday noon, as our happy little party was having cocktails, I mentioned to Norbert that I had twenty pounds, having clung to them throughout my stay in Marseilles, in reality one hundred and eleven days at *Chaves*, my six weeks' freedom being but a couple of flashes in the smelly pan. He offered to change them for dollars. I believed in pounds even if the Germans were to wash their feet in the Red Sea. On Norbert asking in what denominations they were, and being told four fivers, he called that a calamity, since fivers were no longer in circulation in England and in Gibraltar they wouldn't be accepted. I felt certain that, arriving under such unusual conditions, the authorities would waive the point. He asked me if I fancied myself running round Gibraltar asking everybody to change money that wasn't valid any more. That, I admitted, wouldn't suit my *panache*. So Norbert offered to take them and get me one-pound notes, as in the black market fivers continued to flourish. Very

reluctantly I gave him the money. If a professional spendthrift gets attached to something he's worse than a miser. Norbert rushed off with the money. Rushing about was his speciality. "That's the last we see of him," I said to Pierre. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself," Pierre said.

Norbert came back with the news that he wouldn't get the pound notes before the evening. He showed me twenty dollars and said he had got them dirt cheap from a man who was broke. Why wouldn't I take them? I said I wanted twenty pounds. I spent the afternoon sitting outside the bar with his girl—a soothing little person she was. She thought we ought to give up going to that bar. There were too many of us and the police might notice it. In the evening Norbert didn't turn up, but telephoned to arrange to see me next morning. Sunday morning he rang through and suggested luncheon. He didn't come.

"He's done it," I said to Pierre. I waited for him the whole day long. Towards evening a tall fair man came in and asked for him. He pronounced his p's as b's. He was anxious, too, and several times mentioned to the bar-keeper he simply had to see Norbert. The bar was empty and there we sat waiting for him. The fair stranger said he was an Alsatian. I told him I knew he wasn't; he was a German and should make no bones about it. I was a Hungarian, an old comrade-in-arms, I liked the Germans who, apart from everything else, brought a new zest to my life and had brought about so many advantageous changes that I didn't quite know how to thank them. They had helped me attain a long-cherished dream—to sell water-colours on the Place du Tertre. He was delighted, and after a little small talk he confessed to buying gold and jewellery, and everything that had intrinsic value outside France, the export and sale of which was forbidden by Vichy. He slyly hinted that he had at his disposal all the marks and francs in the world, and he wasn't buying them for himself but was performing a patriotic duty. He was stationed at Nice. Norbert had promised him gold bars. He was keen on gold bars.

Norbert didn't come. A pal of his came and we talked; the pal, being a real pal, said he was sure Norbert was up to some mischief. He had seen him in the morning with a suitcase on the Boulevard Gomier, near the station. So he had no doubt decamped. The pal suggested he might still be in Marseilles, and if I gave him a thousand francs he would give me Norbert's address. I said he should come with me to the police and there he could explain his association with the man who did me in. It was pure bluff, and to make it purer I grabbed the lapel of his coat, a proceeding that was distasteful to

me. I was getting tough. The pal turned white and gave the address at once. I thought it was no good going there in the evening, so around seven in the morning I went to the hotel where Pierre and Albert lived and told them Norbert had let us down. But I had his address, so one of them should come with me and we might tackle him and perhaps get part of our money back. I suggested to Pierre to give the submarine up as a bad job. He was haughty and wasn't interested in my losing twenty pounds. He opined I should consider the twenty pounds as my contribution to the trip to Gibraltar: they had all paid, now I had, too.

"Look here, you fool," I said. "If he has pinched my money then there's no Gibraltar." Pierre didn't agree. Hardly condescending to poke his nose out of the blanket, he explained that probably Norbert had decamped because he was afraid to be in Marseilles when we left. Something could miscarry and he didn't want to be in the soup as well. His nose disappeared.

I went to the hotel and was told a M. Dupont, who answered my description, had lived there but had left, two days ago. I noticed with much satisfaction that the proprietress took me for a *condé*.

Around eleven, I went to the bar. A triumphant Pierre was waiting for me. The captain had telephoned they should be ready to leave at noon. That very moment a taxi stopped and Norbert's girl alighted. She was pale and looked wretched.

"It's terrible," she said. "He's left me. He isn't arrested. I was twice at the *Evêché*. He isn't there."

She was unhappy. I told her Norbert had gone off with the only money I had. She cried and said I ought to think of her, who had shared his stormy life for years. She held her puffy little hand before her face, and when I asked a few scathing questions, Pierre, dripping with compassion, intervened, calling me an ungallant brute. She said her whole fortune was one hundred francs. She would willingly give me half of it. I was moved, and told her to keep it. Then she went into the bar, talked for a few minutes to the pub-keeper, then came out and, still trembling, said she would try the *Permanence* this time; she would let us know the result. She got into the taxi and the taxi turned the corner.

"Poor woman," we both said. Now Pierre had to admit that Norbert, the bird, had flown.

But there was the captain's telephone message. "You don't mind paying twenty pounds to get to Gib?" he asked. I said I didn't.

Later I went into the bar and talked to the proprietor, who casually mentioned that Norbert's girl had come to pay him some money she owed him. As a guarantee she had left her identity card

with him, and now she had redeemed it, for without it she couldn't travel. Well, she had taken me in. Pierre was a fool; but what about me? I had a hunch from the start that Norbert went to Nice. He used to have his headquarters or operation bases in Nice. I rang up the station. A train had left for Nice fifteen minutes after she left the bar. She was a fine actress. I couldn't help admiring her. But I wished that I had taken her fifty francs.

Not even that moved Pierre. He went back to his hotel and waited for the captain's marching orders. There were no orders. When evening came they admitted they had been taken in. They admitted other things, too. On Saturday Norbert had told them that the captain had relented and the Stock Exchange man could go too. So they paid him two thousand francs more. He said there was a vacancy on the submarine: to them he had confessed it would be a submarine. I take it as a compliment he didn't consider me as great an idiot as all that. So another Belgian was raked up and another two thousand francs went to Norbert. They heartily agreed with him not to tell me about it because my bossing and continual questions were a bit too much. Now a very disconcerted Pierre asked me what should they do.

"It's thanks to you he got away with it so well," I said. "You remember I didn't want you to interfere, but the moment he saw the sort of person you were he knew it would be child's play. Now you've got it."

But I had got it, too. Pierre and Albert went in the evening to the captain's house. They waited for hours, but nobody came in or went out of the house. When they returned they showed me sharp knives they bought on their way up. They looked so solemn with the knives sticking out of their pockets that I laughed. I was having the time of my life.

"Do you know how to use knives?" I asked. They didn't but their hearts were in the right place. I took the knives away from them. It was safer. The entire Belgian assembly was present. They killed the captain, shot him, knifed him and said I'd see the fate that awaited him. I left the bar but came back an hour later. I was surprised to see the captain leaning languidly against the bar and the five Belgians listening to him with respect.

"The captain has explained everything," Pierre said. "It's owing to the evacuation of Greece that there was no ship at our disposal." "Oh, really," I said. I went up to the captain. "You're a captain? You're a crook. Come along and we'll discuss your rank at the *Evêché*." The captain turned pale, then white with fear implored me to do nothing rash before he'd talked to me. He trembled and

was like jelly on a hot plate. He begged me to go to his house, there to hear an explanation. As I was no keener than he to see the police, I gruffly told him to lead the way. The Belgians were dismayed at my lack of respect. I didn't speak to the captain till we reached his house. Then he told me what happened, and I felt like kicking myself.

Norbert had come to him with the tale that a friend of his, an Englishman, wanted to get to Gibraltar. He wasn't a captain but a foreman in the docks. He knew that on Friday a ship was sailing for Casablanca, and as he knew the skipper he arranged that I should be hidden on the ship till she reached Gibraltar. Norbert offered four thousand francs, which the captain accepted. The captain showed me a seaman's pass, which would have seen me on board, and a pair of large overalls I would have worn.

"You could be in Gibraltar," he said. Then he went on to say that on Saturday he saw Norbert and asked why I refused to go. Norbert replied that I wanted to change some books. Books being in French *livres*, and *livres* are pounds, too. The captain had said there were books in the library of the ship. I thought that was funny. But it was less funny that I missed a perfect chance to reach my goal.

"What about the Belgians, and what about you saying you were a captain?" I asked.

Well, Norbert had asked him to say he was a captain, and having been a sergeant in the war and being a Marseillais to boot, it didn't need much effort for him to say he was a captain. Norbert thought I would have more confidence in a captain. As regards the Belgians, he told Norbert he might find an opportunity to send them off, too. There was none now; for three or four weeks there were no sailings. I told him he was supposed to belong to a Gaullist organization. That astonished him. When I told him Norbert had made roughly fourteen thousand francs on the business he was livid.

"And he gave me nothing," he said with much fury, "but goes off and leaves me here to face the music. Never mind. He'll come back to Marseilles. When I've finished with him you won't recognize him. I'll cut his face up into little squares." I nodded. That sounded fine, but I didn't fear for Norbert's face. Not even for his green hat. Those lads of Marseilles were hot when they spoke: in action they were somewhat tepid. So the captain and I parted company. I returned to the bar.

"What happened?" the Belgians eagerly asked. "I thought you were going to kill him," I said. Pierre, however, said the captain had proved his innocence. That was the only reason they hadn't

knifed him. "Did you buy a new knife?" I asked. He admitted he had. I took it away from him. They told me the captain denied he telephoned on Monday morning. So I asked how then had the message reached him? It was the hotel proprietor who came with the message for them to be ready at noon. I went to his hotel. The proprietor remembered the call. It had been the voice of a woman. Oh, she was a great one, that girl of Norbert's. First she rang up the hotel to let us think we were going, then she came to the bar with her cock-and-bull story. Even in memory I doff my hat to her, though it isn't a green hat.

I left a very dejected Pierre that evening. He had ceased to be the boss, and was ready to follow anything I suggested. I had to think things over in the night, I told them. I threw the knife into the gutter and went back to my hotel. I didn't think. At times like that I leave it to God.

I woke Pierre and Albert at eight in the morning. "I have it," I said. "I failed all along because I trusted others. I can only trust myself. This very week I'll start for Spain. I'll cross the Pyrenees, and because I know Spain and speak Spanish, I shall try to get to Algeciras and then swim to Gibraltar, or get there any other way. If the Spanish catch me I'll tell them I'm English and I'm sure the British authorities won't let me down. The Spaniards will expel me from Spain and that would mean getting to Gibraltar."

"What about us?" Pierre asked. "You can't desert us."

"I don't see why I shouldn't, but I'll take you along provided you can find a few thousand francs to see us through Spain. I can't find any money." Pierre said he knew an Englishman in G—— who used to live in Brussels, and he was sure the Englishman would let him have some money. "All right," I said, "you go to-day to G—— and get the money. We'll leave Friday, the day after to-morrow. But I'm running this show and you can only come on the condition that both of you obey me implicitly. I won't stand for your back-chat and double-crossing, Pierre. I give you my luck in return. As long as you keep within its orbit you'll fare as I. If we're caught, give yourselves up as Englishmen." "Your luck," Pierre said. "You aren't lucky. You've been twice to prison." "But I got out. Anyway, I know I'll get to England. I have that on good authority. I'll get to England because I want that more than anything else in the world."

Pierre left for G—— and returned the following day. The Englishman had given him the money and had asked him not to consider it as a loan. He was an old useless man and if he could get

men to England he was doing his bit, too. With the money in his pocket Pierre tried at once to boss me.

"I don't need the money," I said. "I can always go alone." "But I only wanted to give advice." I told him I didn't need his advice.

On Friday, 27th April, we took the train at dawn for B——, where I vaguely hoped to find a man I knew; he was pro-English. We went into the station through the P.L.M. hotel so that the gendarmes at the entrance of the station shouldn't have a chance to ask for *sauf-conduit*, which we hadn't. When the train pulled out I told myself nothing very bad could befall me once I was out of Marseilles. In the weeks and months that followed I clearly saw the map of the Continent before me: a black mass and down in the left corner a brilliant light: Gibraltar.

Pierre remarked several times that I needed him as badly as he needed me.

"You rat," I said, "if I wanted to walk out on you I'd put you across my knee, spank you, take your money and kick you off the train." Albert, who was improving on acquaintance, agreed with me. So Pierre was quiet for the rest of the train journey.

B—— seemed a mournful town. I found the man we came to see; he was civil and said he could do nothing; anyway, B—— was too far from the frontier. The town and the people, you felt that, weren't pro-English. The war hadn't affected them. The German boot was unknown to them. The Maréchal's face was everywhere, the Cross of Lorraine nowhere. A little paper stuck to doors and shop-windows ingeniously said that Monsieur X was pro-English, Monsieur Y was pro-German: the Maréchal was pro-French.

"We must go on," I said.

At luncheon Pierre said our expedition was a flop and he wanted to return to Belgium. I said he'd better run. After luncheon he went and sat at a different table. Albert whispered to me there was no fear of Pierre deserting us. How would he dare to face his somewhat caustic wife if he failed to get to England! Albert and I got up and walked out, in a little while Pierre came running after us. He would come with us to the end of the world.

"That's stretching it too far," I said. "The first thing now is to divide the money in three equal parts. None of your nonsense any more."

He didn't like that. But I wasn't going to take risks. He gave in. Then we went shopping. I bought a beret. It may sound theatrical, yet a beret makes a great difference in that part of France where everybody wears one. Though I was afraid that my height and English clothes would make me conspicuous, I knew the beret

would balance the impression. You look at a man and, because his headgear is the same as everybody else's, your eyes pass on without taking the trouble to descend to his outlandish coat and suit. I definitely felt unnoticed from that moment onward. We bought two haversacks. I left Paris with three suits, one I had left behind in Marseilles. I insisted on taking two with me. Then we went to the local baths; they were the queerest baths in the world. There were sheets in the tub. You sat in the sheet-enveloped tub and looked at gilt mirrors and heavy plush chairs. The water was ice cold.

Next morning we took a train for ——. I knew it was a dangerous place. It was the centre of Spanish refugees, escaped English soldiers on their way to Spain, Gaullists, Belgians and Dutchmen, all trying to get over the mountains. To make things look easier, the morning paper had the Maréchal's appeal to the youth of France—to stop crossing into Spain and trying to get to the traitor de Gaulle. He depicted the misery of the flower of French youth wending its way from Spanish prison to Spanish prison in utter squalor and misery. In order to give the Maréchal's elbow more power, the paper announced that reinforcements had been sent to the frontier, that patrols and frontier guard posts had been strengthened. I read that out to my companions. "I'd rather have myself shot than be dragged back," I said. "I'll fight and kill few before they catch me," Pierre said. "Did you buy a new knife?" I asked suspiciously. He assured me he hadn't.

We got off at the station before —— and walked into the town. I had a letter to an old Frenchman who used to be something of a politician. After a drink, I told them to wait for me, and went in search of the old man. As I left the café I detected on Pierre's face the thought that he wouldn't see me again. The old man wasn't at home and his wife told me I would find him in the afternoon at a certain café. I returned to the Belgians.

After luncheon I went to that café. Albert came with me, and I told him to sit down at the next table and wait for me: better not to go in or come out together. I went into the café and a waiter pointed the old man out to me. I went up to him and gave him the letter I brought for him. He read it. It was from a mutual friend asking him to be of help to me. But no details were given. Albert was sitting at the next table and was fixedly staring at us.

"What can I do for you?" the old man asked. Quite a few plain-clothes' men were in the café: there was no doubt of that.

"I'm English," I said. "We're three Englishmen. You must help us over to Spain." He looked surprised. He said this wasn't the place to discuss such matters. I should come to his house in the

evening. Albert was staring open-mouthed. I left the café. Outside on the square a lot of gendarmes were lolling about. Here the buses started for different parts of the *Pyrénées Orientales*. I noted that in every outgoing bus a gendarme sat beside the driver. One bus was full and ready to depart. The gendarme who was to travel with it got in and asked the passengers for their *sauf-conduits*. I moved away. Albert wasn't coming; I waited, and after a while went back to the café. Albert was sitting at the same table and staring rigidly at the old man. I made him signs but he didn't understand them. I went out and said to myself that with these people it would be a miracle if I wasn't caught. I rejoined Pierre and we waited for half an hour for Albert. When he came I asked him what the dickens he was up to.

"I stayed on to watch him," Albert said. "I wanted to find out whether he'd do something suspicious."

"I see. And you made yourself conspicuous and probably frightened the man who is going to help us." If they didn't cut out that sort of stuff we would end up badly. Two frontier guards came in and Pierre loudly called for the waitress.

"We can't stay here with those men about," he hoarsely whispered.

"For Christ's sake stop behaving like that. Sit back and don't look like a criminal on the run."

—— was positively a hot place. You saw in its streets more gendarmes than in Marseilles, and that's saying, and seeing, a lot. We had a story ready for them in case they stopped us. We were coming from the occupied zone and had crossed the demarcation line in the Pyrenees and were on our way to the Riviera. So we had no *sauf-conduits*. On the walls of the town was the notice that the *Pyrénées Orientales* was a restricted area and anybody who noticed strangers should report them at once. But as we came from the occupied zone and had crossed the line two days ago we weren't to know that. We were waiting for one of our comrades who was crossing the line to-day.

In the evening I went to the old man's house.

It was like the house of a Spaniard; black furniture, and a brazier giving no heat. He cross-questioned me a long time. He was afraid, but he saw I was genuine and then said it was a difficult proposition. To get out of France was a hard task, but to move about in Franco's Spain was well-nigh impossible. *Sauf-conduits* were needed and the *guardia civil* were everywhere. If I took his advice I would return to Marseilles and try to get away by sea. I shook my head and said as far as I knew there was less hope in Marseilles.

Here they knew next to nothing of the war, hadn't suffered, and

because of the Spanish refugees, who had stolen the fruit off their trees and had trampled on their crops, they were very much of the Right. Later a friend of his came in, a Spaniard, who wasn't only a late soldier of Catalonia but had a lot to do with smuggling to and from Spain. He was a pessimist, too.

"If you had fifteen thousand francs I might find you a guide. But not for less. The guide would take you to Barcelona." I told him we had very little money left. We decided to adjourn till Monday. The Spaniard would make inquiries. Pierre and Albert were waiting for me in a café and, as it had been arranged before I went to the old man, they took rooms in a hotel. It was a cheap, third-rate hotel, the sort of hotel the police were most likely to raid. I inquired why Pierre's choice had fallen on that hotel. It was cheap, he said.

"It would be safer to spend a few francs more," I said. Pierre was stingy. Albert and I had to fight for every sou we spent. Anyway, he got his lesson a week later, and a thorough lesson that was.

Pierre was talking to the hotel-keeper when I came back from my evening walk. He turned to me. "The proprietor says he's very interested in our case. He believes it's quite easy to cross into Spain near ——." I said how interesting, and beckoned to Pierre to come into my room. I got hold of the lapel of his coat. That was a habit I was fast acquiring.

"I'm going to beat the hell out of you," I said. "Didn't I tell you to keep that stupid mouth of yours shut?" He said he wanted to do his bit, that was why he made inquiries. "We'll either end up in jail or I'll have to kill you."

So on Sunday morning I made them rise at seven and we were out of the hotel at half-past. I had told the proprietor to wake us at nine. Sunday and Monday morning passed placidly. The sky was of Spanish blue and the little river rolled through the town, a delight for sightseers. On Monday I saw the old man and the Spaniard again. He found a gipsy woman who for two thousand francs would guide us the same night to the frontier. She would meet us at nine near the *octroi*. That was all he could do for us. We gave him all our money and he went to buy *pesetas* for us.

"I hope this won't be a repetition of your twenty pounds," Albert said.

"Don't worry," I said. The Spaniard was back in the afternoon with the *pesetas*.

"Do you suppose your feet will stand it?" Pierre asked.

That was a question that predominated in my mind, too. For in

the year 1930 I had a bad go of typhoid fever and as a result my feet became practically useless. The bones shortened, or was it the muscles, I don't know; I had already had two operations, but I never gave in and despite my feet I still managed to walk twenty miles with a gun. But this was a different proposition. To walk fifty miles and climb the Pyrenees seemed a lot to ask from my feet. I shrugged my shoulders. "My will-power will see my feet into Spain," I said.

At nine we were at the *octroi*. There were two cross-roads, a lonely pub and many people were coming and going. I told Pierre and Albert to disappear into the darkness and I remained on the road waiting for the Spaniard. If any trouble took place they were to hop it. We had agreed from the start that nobody would stop for the others. That sort of thing wouldn't help the man in trouble and the others had a sacred duty to perform. England pitted against the mighty German machine, against mighty German cunning and German organizing power needed every man she could get. In a way I dragged those two dead-weights along as part of my self-appointed duty to England; moreover, they were pilots. The Spaniard came, we walked up and down the road but there was no gipsy woman. He left me and went to her house, but she wasn't in. Eventually she came with her husband and a friend; she had changed her mind and didn't dare to take us along. The Spaniard implored her. I put in a lot of beseeching, too. She gave in. But it was too late in the night. We must leave at dawn, and she gave me her hand with a lot of flourish, saying I could trust the word of a gipsy. We went to an hotel, had a few hours' sleep and were back at the *octroi*. The Spaniard was there. The gipsy never came. We went back to the hotel and resumed our interrupted sleep. One more pretty fancy had left me: the pledged word of a gipsy.

We saw the Spaniard at noon. He had seen the gipsy woman again and now it was certain she would be at the *octroi* at nine.

It was a dark night, and I told Pierre and Albert to make themselves scarce. I walked up and down with the Spaniard and time fled, and there was no gipsy woman. Suddenly the Spaniard grabbed my arm.

"Those fools will get us arrested. Look at that."

As I've said, on the cross-roads there was plenty of movement. Where the roads cut each other stood a large tree. Behind the tree hovered my companions. They were smoking. In the dark night two red pinpoints came round regularly the trunk of the tree. Passers-by stopped to stare at those men hiding so conspicuously behind the tree. Probably getting ready for murder, or worse.

"Let's go," the Spaniard nervously said. "We'll have the police on us in a moment." We left. I was shaking with fury. After a few yards I looked back. Carrying the haversacks, the two Belgians were strolling carefree behind us. Then we saw a police car stopping a little in front of us. The Spaniard stopped, but I dragged him on. The policemen had stopped a man and a woman who were ahead of us. We walked past. The policemen were too busy to notice us.

"Somebody must have rung up the police," the Spaniard said. I couldn't blame that somebody. After a while I looked back. There was no Pierre and no Albert.

"The police must have got them," the Spaniard said. He left me. He said the police knew him as a suspicious character. He disappeared in the dark. Another car raced past me. I cursed heartily.

I went to the main square and didn't know what to do. I heard a low whistle. There was the Spaniard.

"They've been pinched," he said. "I went back. I couldn't see them. Look." We saw a Black Maria gracefully gliding over the bridge and disappearing towards the local prison.

"I'll see you in the morning," the Spaniard said.

"If I'm still available," I said ruefully. Then I told him I proposed to go to the Grand Hotel, which being the most expensive hotel in town, might be less likely to be searched by the police. I had no illusions. If Pierre was caught he would blab out the truth, nothing but the truth, and I would be back in prison. In bed I reviewed the situation, and it seemed a poor one. I told myself I should beat it. It was foolish to stay. I was letting down myself without helping anybody. But I remained in bed smoking one cigarette after the other. Then there came a harsh rap on the door.

"*La Police*," a deep voice said. Well, that was that. I got up, opened the door and there stood Pierre and Albert, grinning from ear to ear.

"We frightened you, ha, ha," they said, and grinned more. I don't know why I held myself back. The Assizes would surely have acquitted me.

It appeared they had been stopped by the police, said they were Belgian refugees and had just crossed over from Occupied France. The police told them to go next day to the Prefecture and, as they say in France, regularize their situation. Then they had gone in search of the Spaniard. They knew his address. They hid in his coal-cellar and when they saw him sneaking home they drew his attention to themselves. I lugubriously asked how they did that.

"Oh, we crawled out, tiptoed up and I touched his shoulder from

behind and shouted, Police." Pierre was bursting with mirth. "I know I'll kill you before I'm through with you," I said.

We decided to give up chasing the mirage called the gipsy woman. Pierre and Albert were emphatically of the opinion that the haversacks made us conspicuous. I agreed. But I didn't want to arrive in England looking like a tramp, and said that whatever happened I must take both my suits along, but we might jettison the haversacks. We ought never to have deviated from our original plan: to trust no-one but ourselves. We would start for the Pyrenees and look no more for a guide in ——. It was agreed to make a start that Thursday, 1st May.

The Maréchal's government had proclaimed May Day as the feast of labour. The town would be full of revellers. There would be much coming and going, and we could slip out in peace.

"We can't leave by road," I said. "The first gendarme would stop us. We must get to ——. That looks like a good base. Here's the map. Now I want you two to do only one thing. Find out how we could get there. There's no railway marked on the map. A bus is out of the question. Find out how near we could get by train. From there we'll walk, and it's only my luck we can count on. The Spaniard and the old man have assured me that British subjects are kept in prison for a little time but eventually are expelled to Gibraltar. Our one great risk is to get out of France."

Next morning I went and bought a market-bag. That bag was like Cæsar's wife. You couldn't come from afar with a market-bag and you couldn't be going further than the grocer round the corner. Pierre brought the information there was a train for ——. Then we went in search of a compass. In the shops we got the answer, and the answer never varied, that their stock of compasses had been bought up by relatives of prisoners of war in Germany. But after a lot of running round we found one. The afternoon I spent with the old man, who outlined the route we should follow. He was still sceptical, but thought there was nothing else for me to try. There were two villages at the foot of the Pyrenees. Let me call them A and B. We shouldn't go to A because there the mountain was too steep. We should go to B, walking the whole night and be hidden in the forest that came like a black-out curtain to the outskirts of the village. He marked on the very third-rate map we had the different posts of gendarmes and frontier guards and wished us good luck.

"England must restore France once the war is won," he said. "Without France, England would never be safe."

. . . . .

That May Day was a hilarious affair. You heard the song of the Legion of Vichy right and left. In the afternoon we boarded the train.

"You're sure it's all right?" I asked my two navigation officers. Yes, it was all right. They were sure of it. I wasn't; and after a time said this is funny, we shouldn't be beside the sea. Yet the sea was there. Then the door of the compartment opened and a gendarme came in.

"Your papers," he said. "Are you going to Spain?"

There was something bitterly wrong somewhere. We recited our tale, which had been embellished with a new detail, that we were going into the mountain to work as wood-cutters.

"There's no forest at ——," the gendarme said. He added, "It's forbidden to travel in the international train. I'll be waiting for you when we get there." He went out.

"But this," I said, "must be the train to Spain, the one train we wanted to avoid from the start."

A passenger asked what was the trouble. I said I didn't know.

"The Gestapo is everywhere," the passenger said.

The train stopped. It was our destination. That seemed to be the end of my trip to England. Albert was at the window and said the gendarme had got off and now we were lost. I looked out through the other window and saw a train was pulling out in the opposite direction. I opened the door and told them to jump for it. The train was already gathering speed as we got into it, market-bag and all. "I only asked you to find out about ——," I said to Pierre, "and you couldn't even do that."

We got off at a wayside station and went to the local inn and asked for a room. We put ourselves down as three Belgians. Upstairs the argument about the wrong train went on and we lost our tempers. Pierre danced about the room and was rather hysterical. I beat him. I felt the better for it, so did Albert; but later I was sorry, because his nose wouldn't stop bleeding. Thus ended the 1st of May

Next morning we ate breakfast downstairs, and from the window saw two frontier guards on horseback coming down the road. Then came a gendarme, a little later two gendarmes. We went and found another inn, which was quiet and off the road. As there was nobody I could credit even with a spark of sense, I worked out the route on the map. It seemed that if we left at night we could get to the village of B before dawn. But we wouldn't take the road, and there was a river to be crossed. I sent out Albert to reconnoitre, and wrote down on a piece of paper what I wanted. He came back

in an hour's time. The only way to cross the river was across the railway bridge, which was under repair. Many workmen were working on it. From the bridge you could see the mountains, the forest and the village of B. The bridge was in a bad state, and it would be folly to try and cross it at night. We went out to take some air. A gendarme was coming down the road. A watch-maker's shop was near the pub. We stopped, and looked into the shop-window. In the window I could see the gendarme looking at us. He looked back twice before he got out of sight. We returned to the inn.

We would leave at four. That was my plan. At any rate it was less suspicious to pass the bridge while the workmen were on it. We would lie in the reeds further on and wait till the moon went down, then cut across country and get to B before dawn. "What about food?" I asked.

Pierre, because of his Spanish looks, was sent out to buy anything he could. All he could buy was a loaf of dark bread, which used the entirety of our ration tickets. The food situation in this part of the world was worse than in Marseilles.

At four we started. We walked with about fifty yards between each of us. First went Albert, who knew the road; I came next, with the bag dangling by my side; and Pierre brought up the rear. One gendarme passed us. He glanced at me, but the beret and the bag made me merge into the landscape. The bridge was very much under repair. The wind was blowing with angry strength. Hopping from board to board, with the water racing so near and invitingly beneath me, I thought the wind would raise me, then hurl me into the water. And because my feet haven't much strength when I can use but one at a time, I felt I would never get across. I knew the water would be icy. But I got across. We reached the reeds and sat down and shivered because of the wind.

The moon that night didn't want to leave the sky. There she was preening herself—the reeds and the fields and vineyards were out of all proportion—and the reeds whispered of utter tiredness, and we felt as though a host of gendarmes were breaking their way through the reeds. But nothing stays, not even the moon. She went and we were off.

We moved mostly through vineyards, and that is a pastime I cannot recommend. There was always one or the other of us either on his back or on his belly as the result of a fall. The monotony of falling singly was now and then relieved by the three of us falling simultaneously. We made as much noise as a herd of elephants. Whenever I fell the market-bag came down with a thud.

The worst of it was we didn't appear to advance, and we used the compass as a topic for argument. None of us quite knew where we were going.

Towards two in the morning we lost ourselves in a thicket. When we got out of it the mountain looked elusively far. At three we ran into a village that shouldn't have been there at all and we retraced our steps. Then there were more vineyards, and our backs were sore and so were our knees. The bag banged continuously against my leg. The bag was a nuisance. But the biggest nuisance was that Pierre, either remembering his boy-scout past or going back further and raking up the behaviourism of Fenimore Cooper's Indians, went down and lay flat whenever a slight sound of the night arose. In the beginning, that was disconcerting, and I used to search for him and couldn't find him. There came, however, a moment when all of us behaved as though we weren't pale-faces but Black Eagles at their best. A light was coming towards us. We lay on our bellies for a considerable time and the light moved and another light moved further up, and there seemed a third light signalling and that lasted about half an hour. Smugglers, I said, trying to cheer myself with the romantic word. It brought the mountain nearer. The light moved off and we moved on. The earth had a wet smell.

The old man at ——— had told me that, when approaching B, we should turn to the left and pass the cemetery. On the other side of the cemetery was a path that led into the safety of the forest. We argued a lot about our bearings. To me it looked as if we were too much to the south-west. Then a village came out of the dark and we though it might well be B. Anyway, we were too tired. We turned to the left and there was a high wall with the eerie length of cypresses on the other side of it. Albert lifted me. I looked in and the silence of the grave slept among the tombstones. It was the cemetery. I don't know why, but looking into the graveyard I felt strangely moved. I could have stayed there on Albert's shoulder, with the cypresses getting longer and longer; but Albert's shoulders deemed it otherwise. When I was a child you couldn't drag me past a cemetery in the evening; now it spoke of friendliness and peace; a refuge from the alien world around me. Forget it, I told myself. I forgot it and on we stumbled.

The ground was getting higher and light was beginning to come. A few habitations halted the mounting light here and there. Trees were springing up, and then we found a clump of trees surrounding a kind of crater. We pushed into the crater, and throwing our plans and caution to the wind that was blowing with the same anger we

sat down and slept. But, first, we drank a little brandy from the bottle we had brought along for the cold and the journey. When it was Pierre's turn to drink he upset the bottle and the brandy gushed to the ground. The empty bottle rolled to the bottom of the crater. I was too tired to call him a fool. We fell asleep.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

I SLEPT for about twenty minutes: those twenty minutes brought the day on. I opened my eyes and saw we were in the depths of a vegetable garden. I looked up, and on the edge of the crater, with the trees behind him, stood a short, youngish man, and he was smiling down on us.

"*Bonjour, messieurs,*" he said. That woke my companions, and in a half-drowsy voice Pierre rattled out the story of the demarcation line and the rest about wood-cutting. "There are quite a few Belgians working on the mountain," the little man said. He spoke with a Spanish accent. I suddenly decided to risk everything. I addressed him in Spanish.

"We're English, we three," I said. "You're a Spaniard, I suppose a refugee, and you must help us. We want to get to England to fight for the cause that's your cause, too. I must have a guide to get us across the Pyrenees. You see, I'm putting myself into your hands."

"Wait," said the Spaniard, and went away.

"Where is he going?" Pierre asked in a shrill voice.

"He's bringing us a guide," I said. Within ten minutes the Spaniard was back, accompanied by a tall, surly man, with a reddish-grey moustache and an unpleasant face. You knew from the start that face had never been ravaged by a smile.

"Here's your guide," the Spaniard said. "Be gone before the sun comes up. Start now. Here's a bottle of wine. I've no other food." We got up. It was a difficult procedure. We climbed out of the crater.

"Could I give you some money?" I asked the Spaniard. "What can I do to thank you?"

"*Nada, hombre,*" he said. "It's for the freedom of the world. *Libertad.*"

"I shall remember you," I said in a small voice, "in all my prayers."

We started up the mountain.

The guide told me this wasn't B, it was A. So luckily for us we had erred by ten miles. Of course, there's a cemetery on the outskirts of every village. The mountains loomed up formidable and much too high. The sun came out hot. Now and then the guide made us stop while he went forward alone. That meant we were approaching a road. Pierre went down on all fours every time that happened. The guide told me in Spanish to tell him to stop that nonsense.

"I can't," I said. "I've given it up."

Then the roads ceased. He said he would take us across the highest peaks, that was the safest. We climbed among trees and stones. At times a stream cut across our path and then my feet had to jump from stone to stone with the bag trying to induce me to take an icy bath. The forest was around us, above us; the sun was hot; the stones and rocks were everywhere; and my feet were giving me hell. The guide stopped, and we rested for ten minutes. We were mortally tired—none of us being mountaineers—and hungry. We drank a little wine. I held on to the bottle while Pierre drank. Then we went on. I cursed *Chaves* and the palliasses that had taken so much vigour from me and had made me lose the habit of movement. On the other hand it was thanks to *Chaves* that my feet had less weight to carry.

Towards ten the guide lay down and said we should sleep for an hour. This sleep did the trick. Pierre could hardly rise at the end of it and when I made the first step I secretly hoped the gendarmes would catch us. "I can't go on," Albert said. "But we're going to England," I said.

That made him rise. The mountain became steeper. We reached a peak, hoped it might be Spain, but it was only our first peak. Three more peaks were before us. We crawled down the steep mountainside, and then we mounted again. Ice-cold streams overhung by moss met us regularly. The guide said we shouldn't but we drank from every stream. Some of them had such a thick shroud of moss that we practically grazed when we got down to them. We heaved ourselves from rock to rock, and at times the mountain was so steep that we had to swing from tree to tree, and the next tree was almost above our heads. Of course, the bag dangled against my side and got into bushes and pulled me to trees. The fourth mountain seemed unreachable.

The guide proceeded always at the same speed, moving with ease as though he were out for a stroll. Perhaps he was.

The fourth and highest peak was barren, the plaything of the wind. The wind had the taste of the snow of last winter and of all the winters to come. The peak seemed to shiver.

"Here is Spain," our guide said.

I looked down on Catalonia. It was a far spreading view. The sea was there, too. It was like a faded map; grey, and in places brown. The sea was grey, too.

"You've kept your word," Albert said. "You've brought us to Spain."

I wanted to look back on France. I somehow felt that if I could remove that ridge that hid France I could see Nona in her red hat taking Dodo for a walk and Cooky gambolling behind them. But, rooted in the beginning of the world, the ridge remained immovable.

The descent into Spain was tiring. At dusk we got to a charcoal-burner's hut. The guide and I went in. The charcoal-burner was little larger than a dwarf. He gazed at me sadly.

"You'll get caught, too," he said. "They all get caught. The other day a Frenchman came here. I told him the same. He was caught next day. You know Spain, do you?" I said I knew Spain. "You won't recognize it. It's the state of the *guardia civil*. One-third of the population wears uniform, one-third is in prison, and the remainder is starving abroad. We're starving, too." He showed me his week's ration of bread. The bread was dark. The bread of *Chaves* was dainty compared to that bread. He said he would put us up for the night. Pierre and Albert came in and spoke to me in French.

"What," said the charcoal-burner, "you're French? You treated our refugees like dirt and now you send them back to Franco to be shot. Get out, all of you." I argued that they were Belgians, but it was of no avail. Belgium had handed Companys over to Franco. You couldn't argue with the dwarf. He offered to keep me for the night, but I refused. It was either all of us, or none of us. So it was none of us. "I wish England victory every day," the dwarf called after me.

The guide said he knew a farmstead higher up on the Spanish side of the mountain. So we climbed again. Night came and the guide lost his way. Rain came too, mountain rain with the taste of icy streams and swaying trees. We spent the night in the open with the rain and the wind. The guide built a fire. It was hard labour to keep that fire going. I sat too near to it and burnt my trouser legs. In the middle of the night the guide woke up and

asked for his money. It was but two hundred francs he wanted. I paid him. He slept on. I didn't sleep. I watched the fire, and after a while my overcoat surrendered to the rain and I was wet all over. Pierre and Albert slept a little, then the fire scorched them, too.

At dawn we pushed off. I was becoming proud of my feet. They were in agony, completely done to the world, yet somehow they dragged me along. Among bleak stones stood a bleak house and the wind was going round it in circles. We went in. An old woman sat beside a dead fire and a younger woman sat beside her. Worn-out faces, tired eyes, as though they had done our tramping.

"Are you English?" the old woman asked. I nodded. "Is England going to win the war?" I nodded. "How long will the war last?" "Three more years." "Then we'll all die of starvation here."

Pierre said I should ask her to sell us some food. She gave us a cup of milk and exactly four potatoes. That was all she could spare. Then her son, the husband of the younger woman, came in. I put our case to him and he said it was hopeless. He couldn't find us a guide because a Spaniard got five years' imprisonment if he helped foreigners to smuggle themselves across the country. The roads were full of *carabineros* and *guardia civil*, and they asked for your papers at every turning.

"But this isn't Spain," I said.

"No, *señor*, this is no longer Spain. This is the country Serrano Suñer has given to the Germans."

But he had an idea. There was a *feria* a little way on. The roads would be full of people going to the *feria*. If we all left our luggage behind and just walked on the road like any ordinary pleasure-bent person on his way to the *feria* we might get to Figueras. There, perhaps, we could find a guide, though he doubted that. He would keep our belongings and we could send for them after the war. I said we would try that. I asked whether we could sleep for a few hours. He said not in the house, because if the *guardia civil* came round he would be lost, too. He took us to the loft above the barn and said we could sleep on the dry grass, provided we said we crept in without him knowing if the *guardia civil* or the *carabiñeros* came along.

We slept. There were large holes in the boards, and beneath us a lone hen talked to herself. At one he woke us, we shaved and I left behind the scorched suit, shirts, and was now travelling really light. I hope the bag missed me. He guided us to the main road and the sun was hot and I said I didn't think my overcoat was good camouflage for a *feria*-bent Spaniard, so I gave that to the young man,

too. I was in the mood for giving. He left us on the main road and we walked on with cheerful faces as befits those who don't come from far and are out to enjoy themselves. What about the merry-go-round, the shooting-booth and the rest of it?

We passed through a village. I was going in front, the Belgians a trifle behind. A rivulet ran through the village. There was a bridge. I crossed the bridge. The road bent and straightened itself. A voice hailed me. I looked back. Two *carabineros* were coming up from behind. Against my instructions and all rules of common-sense, Pierre and Albert had stopped near the water, had gone on their knees, and drank for the last time as free men. The *carabiñeros*, who were resting on the roadside, saw at a glance these men were thirsty, and that they came from afar.

"We come from the mountain," I said. "We're wood-cutters."

"Not with those hands."

"We're just going to the *feria*. We'll be back to-night."

"You're foreigners. You're under arrest."

They searched me. There still was on me my *carte d'identitée*. They didn't look at it. They took the money from us.

"This money is confiscated," they said. They took our cigarettes, and on Pierre they found a knife. So he did buy one.

"Prison will be easy for me," I said, "because you'll be sharing it with me, Pierre."

The *carabiñeros* were friendly and I tried to bribe them. They refused, saying it was no good, if they let us go we would be caught further on. They told us to sit down on the roadside, for they wanted to see if any other wood-cutters came along. I enjoyed the joke. I asked if I could go down to the water and have a drink. They agreed. I went down on my knees and as I put my hand into the water I let go my last identity paper. It was, I must admit, a queer sensation.

The *carabiñeros* then held a long conference. The knife and cigarettes were bad offences. So to save us from more trouble they would forget about the knife and cigarettes if we never mentioned them again. They went through our belongings again and took our safety-razors, too, with the same excuse. Then they took us to a farmhouse, where we got a very good meal. The farmer's wife was French; she tried to persuade the *carabiñeros* to let us go, but they said they couldn't take the risk. Anyway, we shouldn't worry. The English always got home after a time. We slept in the prison of a small village, and we slept well.

In the morning they took us to Figueras. We travelled by bus. In Figueras they gave us breakfast and made us sign a paper that they

had found altogether six hundred pesetas on us. So for the meal at the farmhouse and for the breakfast they charged one hundred and fifty pesetas.

We were taken to an old house where we waited in an ante-room. On the door was a board saying this was the study of the *juez d'instruccion*. In short, an old friend. I was the first to be ushered into the judge's presence. A modest-looking man he was, without the awe-inspiring trappings I got accustomed to in France. He asked what my name was. I hadn't yet thought of a name; so I blurted out the first name that came into my head.

"My name is Peter Burke," I said. I could have said Edwards or Thornton just as well. I was born in Jersey. If anybody disbelieved me he could go to German-occupied Jersey and find out for himself. I was living in Brussels and came here on foot. I had never been to Marseilles. My friends were English, too. I was here because it was my duty to return to my country when my country was in danger. I bought the pesetas in a café in Brussels and hadn't the faintest idea who sold them to me. The judge said he must confiscate the money as contraband. As far as he was concerned, the affair was finished. Now I was to be handed over to the military authorities. He shook hands and said good-bye to Mr. Burke. I offered to translate for Pierre, but Pierre said he wanted to speak alone. He came out from the judge saying we were free. His face sparkled with joy. Of course, he misunderstood the judge when the judge said that he was through with us.

The judge handsomely gave us back fifty pesetas, and our *carabiñeros* shook hands with us and handed us over to two men of the security police, and we were taken to the police prison. It was a small and dirty cell. But on the wall was drawn a large Union Jack and underneath it was the legend: England For Ever.

The wall was full of English inscriptions.

Over the door were three letters, "B.E.F."; underneath them in brackets, 'Boys England Forgot'. But there were no Englishmen in the cell. They were all Frenchmen. Young fellows; one of them had crossed for the third time into Spain. They were to be handed over to the French consul to be sent back to France where one month of prison awaited them.

"I'll try it the fourth time," the French boy said. A civilian opened the door and asked who could afford to buy lunch. Well, we had fifty pesetas. A lunch cost five pesetas, so I said to Pierre that we should pay for a lunch for each of the Frenchmen. He refused.

"You had a lesson to-day," I said, "in how stinginess pays. Think of the money we could have spent in ——, but practically ate

nothing because you wanted to save. Now where's the money?" I ordered ten lunches. Some of the Frenchmen hadn't eaten for days. In the evening we three were marched up to the castle, which was the military prison. An intelligence officer questioned us. He said it meant internment for the duration. I answered that I got away from the Germans, the Vichy people, and my next move would be to get away from the Spanish, too. He smiled. We were taken into a cell. The air was heavy. It was dark. "Any English soldiers here?" I asked. There were seven Scotch soldiers. We talked the whole night.

The food wasn't bad, but you slept on the floor. The other occupants of the cell were Belgians. One of them showed Pierre a letter from the Belgian consul, in which the consul enclosed twenty-five pesetas. Pierre shouted at me; he was a fool to say he was English. Look how well the Belgian consul did the Belgians. I shrugged my shoulders. We were each on our own again.

The following day I sat on the floor and we talked on and on, and in the evening we heard we were moving next day. They sang 'We'll hang out the washing on the Siegfried Line,' the right song for the boys England had forgotten. Jack, who was twenty, had a fine tenor voice and had been to *Chaves*, too. He sang the whole night, and the Belgians cursed and there were many inter-allied quarrels. At dawn we were handcuffed. I was handcuffed to a Glasgow printer. We were kept handcuffed on the roads, at the station, in the train, the whole way to Barcelona. Before Barcelona, the *guardia civil* said they were taking us to the *Carcel Modelo*, that prison of far-flung fame. We marched down the streets of Barcelona in handcuffs. They were taken off once the gates of the prison closed on us.

I looked round with the eyes of an expert. It seemed cleaner and there was more air in it than past experience led me to expect. We stayed there for six days. I was getting fast accustomed to the name of Burke. I met more Englishmen. Two of them had got there with false Marseilles passports, for which they had paid fortunes. They were caught the moment the Spaniards glanced at the passports. But I understood the Spanish authorities were treating them with the indulgence the meek in spirit and children deserve. Standing in the courtyard one of the two said to me of his partner, "He isn't a gentleman." He picked a louse off his sleeve and we walked on.

We were in the courtyard twice for two hours every day; that

was an improvement. The prison was full of reds. In Spain anybody who fought against Franco is a red. Sentences ranging from fifteen years to thirty years were the lighest sentences. There was a man who had been waiting for his execution for two years. He woke up every morning expecting to see the daylight for the last time. He told me you get accustomed even to that. The reds hoped England would win the war; that seemed their only hope.

On the seventh day our party of twenty-five was marched out of the prison; fifteen Belgians and ten British; we were going on to the next stage, Cervera, in High Catalonia. This time we were made fast with a rope, and marched like that to the station: I felt like a horse-thief. The Scots soldiers whistled 'Tipperary' and tried to swing their arms; and the rope hurt them.

In Cervera Mr. Burke spent a fortnight. It was cold in Cervera. The walls of the prison, which was half-way between a jail and an internment camp, were covered with writing. A Frenchman had written with a flourish, 'Down with the tyrants, the day of liberation is approaching.' A British soldier, with praiseworthy realism, wrote across it, 'Twenty-one ——— days.' Another inscription said, 'Bonny Scotland, what I suffer for you.'

Food was scarce. Our diet was broad beans, mostly their skins. The prison was run by a delightful Andalusian sergeant and a less delightful but very mercenary canteen manager. Jaime his name was, and in English, French and Flemish the walls proclaimed he was a thief. He was. He sold us all sorts of useless things. Our favourites were large cakes with almonds and honey. The sergeant sneaked into our cells and sold the cakes sixpence cheaper than Jaime. Because I know Spanish, I acted as a sort of clerk of the prison. I took all the papers of the prisoners and I indulged in a fair amount of forgery, thus making it possible for quite a few men of Allied nationality to get to England. The lieutenant in charge of the prison was a sarcastic, ignorant young man. We quarrelled a lot, for he believed in the Germans and their victory. He clapped his hands when Crete was lost, and rushed to me with the paper when the *Hood* was sunk. But it was the sergeant who first told me of Rudolph Hess's visit to England. That didn't surprise me. It only raised my sneaking admiration for German logic. More and more British soldiers arrived. Then came two officers. One was a doctor, the other a chartered accountant. Both deeply deplored there were no separate cells for officers.

The doctor wasn't a bad sort. He was just suburbia, and after the year that had been my share I wasn't fit for suburbia. My loss, I admit. The chartered accountant was different. He was the I-

wish-I'd-been-to-a-public-school type. Narrow-minded, very sure of himself, and used to say his motto was to live dangerously. The prison of Cervera had a rectangular court. He and I used to walk up and down for hours. I found out dangerous living consisted for him of singing in the choir and being the treasurer of a benevolent society. We often discussed the downfall of France. Frenchmen and Frenchwomen had risked their lives helping him to escape. But they were frogs, and had surrendered. I argued with him as if I were a year younger and he were a Frenchman running down England. The soldiers had a different opinion. They appreciated the help they received. Many of their mates had stayed behind, hidden by the French for the duration. They had seen the strength and surprises of the German Army: they didn't need long explanations for the downfall of France.

"The fall of France," I said to the accountant, "shouldn't make us stick out our chest. It's a lesson that should make us thoughtful and try an entirely different world after this war. Less gilt-edged securities. The downfall of France was the bankruptcy of our materialistic outlook on life." He disagreed. No wonder: he often said his one ambition was to become a financier.

As we walked up and down the courtyard we passed and repassed the palliasse and blanket of a dead Scotsman. That was a sad, moving story.

Two Scots brothers had lived shoulder to shoulder, as it befits twins, were interned the same day and had escaped the same day. Together they climbed the Pyrenees and together they arrived at Cervera. One of them died of angina pectoris; the other was in the local hospital, and the doctor and I, escorted by the sergeant, went to visit him. He thought his brother was alive and in hospital in Barcelona. He had a tired face. The doctor gave him the consul's message that next day an ambulance would come and take him to Barcelona. His tired face lit up because, as he said, he would see his brother next day. That was a mistake. It was the day after. For he died when he arrived in Barcelona.

On 1st June fifty-six of us departed under the escort of *guardia civil* for Miranda de Ebro, the largest internment camp in Spain. We travelled in two trucks and the *guardia* were unpleasant because they thought we were of the late International Brigade. I explained that we weren't. They admitted we were only doing our duty trying to get back to our country, our country being in danger. But I couldn't speak to them in peace. The chartered accountant interrupted me a lot. It was always to ask the same question.

"Please find out if there are special huts for officers." There were.

He considered Miranda a great improvement. I hated it. Probably because I had more than my share of captivity behind me. As time died and, like Richard II, I became time's timepiece, I hated it more.

Life is very much like a third-rate novel. A few high-spots and a lot of padding. There were no high-spots in Miranda. Hemmed in by mountains, Miranda de Ebro stood bleak and melancholy two thousand feet high. The concentration camp, which had but recently ceased to be a prisoner-of-Civil-War-camp, had white-washed huts and the huts swarmed with lice. The real lice; and the others—our fellow humans. It rained a lot, then there was mud. The sun shone fiercely if he had a chance. Then the lice were happy. The latrines were a symphony in dirt major. But they shaved our heads because, so they said, Franco's Spain believed in cleanliness.

There was in the camp every nationality under the sun. Spaniards, too. Prisoners of Franco, Basques most of them. On the parade ground they had to stand to attention and salute with outstretched arms the flag the same way as the rest of us. Every morning and every evening we marched down to the parade ground and stretched out our arms and saluted the flag. The officer taking the salute shouted '*España.*' The prisoners answered, '*Una, Grande, Libre,*' then *Arriba España*, *Viva Franco* and *Viva España* followed. The British soldiers, for Franco, found a word that's part and parcel of the vocabulary of every soldier and they shouted it in chorus.

The railway line was near and trains rattled by. Every week or so new contingents of prisoners arrived. They disappeared in the dirt, lice and nausea of the camp. The Allies quarrelled among themselves. The Dutch quarrelled with the Belgians, the French quarrelled with the English, the English quarrelled with the Scots. Only the Poles stood out like a rock of equanimity, and I must say they were admirable men.

For Hogarth or Goya there was much material. For a student of everything that's depraved Miranda was a green pasture. But it was, taking it as a whole, a screaming proof that man was born free and didn't belong behind bars and barbed wire. Behind bars and barbed wire he ceases to be man. *Chaves* had been a nightmare, but this was so near to life that it was a bad joke, like playing the saxophone at a funeral, or hoisting the German flag on the Arc de Triomphe. There were no palliasses. You lay on the floor. In my hut we were over a hundred. In *Chaves* there was no stealing among prisoners; here even your new razor-blade disappeared if you took your eye off it. Always beware of amateurs. The keen air made you

hungry. So those foreigners, who before their internment had resided a long time in Spain and knew the ropes, working together with the soldiers who guarded us, used to sell three biscuits for sixpence and a cigarette for sixpence. The Spanish N.C.O.'s went round and struck you with whips. The statue of Franco on the parade ground dominated the scene.

The Basques sang sad songs and were mostly drunk. The Germans held the best jobs and treated their fellow prisoners badly. There was also a Turk, who had fought in the Canadian Army in the last war. He was the local rag-seller. Everything was for sale. The new prisoner first sold his watch, then his fountain-pen, then his shoes and shirt. With the money he either bought a few biscuits or got drunk at the canteen. Then there was the Latvian seaman. He slept near the door. Now and then the American Red Cross sent him a parcel. He sold it and sat in his corner and got quietly drunk and called you over when you went out or came in, and in a quiet voice said you were the son of a bitch. Then there was the Chinaman who spoke only Chinese. He smiled and hadn't the faintest idea where he was: his smile told you so. A German slept not far from me—an anti-Nazi German. He said, "This is a war of life or death. But if England wins she should give Germany a more lenient peace than Versailles was."

The British section received money and food from the Embassy. We wallowed in corned beef, tinned fish and cheese for one day in the week. You couldn't resist eating it all at one gulp. Anyway, I couldn't. We got drunk that day, too. There was Danny, the seaman from Edinburgh, who was a master drunkard. He had been a prisoner-of-war in both German wars and had escaped every time. There was Freddy, the sapper, who quoted Omar Khayyám. The four silent soldiers from the Western Isles; they hardly knew a word of English. The Armoured Corps sergeant, who used to be a bookmaker's clerk, and longed for the Japanese girl he left behind in Marseilles.

There was a lot of singing. It usually began with 'South of the Border', and ended with 'There'll always be an England', and 'God Save the King'. Often after lights-out in the hut snores were interrupted by Danny's utterly satisfied voice: *There'll be no promotion this side of the ocean. . . .*

Somebody would be sick and another would speak in his sleep in a language you'd never heard before. The night-watchman shouted '*Silencio*'. 'You son of a bitch,' the Latvian quietly said. Then, in the morning, we were all marched down to the flagstaff.

The Russians came into the war in June. I almost felt sorry that

the honour and sacrifice of beating the Hun wasn't left exclusively to England. On the *quatorze juillet*, the two Lancashiremen (who had lived a long time in France) and I sang the 'Marseillaise' at the canteen. A Spanish officer came up and first fetched me one. It is a long time since I went to South America, the Southern Cross has been dimmed by the years, but at that moment I saw it clearly surrounded by all the stars. The Lancashiremen came next. In the evening I went in utter fury to the guard-room and told the officer that though I was a prisoner he had no right to hit me. He was rather nice about it. Then one day a sergeant struck me with a whip. I didn't remonstrate. I was acquiring the habit. One evening Danny and a Dutchman had a long argument.

"My country, right or wrong," Danny shouted. "Isn't it so, Burke?"

"Your country, right or wrong," I said. I thought I ought to have that tattooed on my forehead.

The camp was a good breeding-place for rumour. After Russia was in the war, rumour had it that the Spanish government had stopped releasing the British. It was nearly three months since I became a prisoner of Spain, and at night, with Freddie the sapper and an Aberdeen fellow, we made plans to escape. That wouldn't be fun; the soldiers fired at you. The preceding winter six men had been caught, and shot after they surrendered and sat on the ground waiting to be taken back to the camp. We had seen men brought back and sent to the labour camp of Palancia. There seemed no other way out. Pierre was going round the camp telling all who listened to him that I wasn't English but Hungarian. It wasn't to be mean or to get me into trouble: he just said that and jeopardized my future because he was made like that.

I was getting weary of being Mr. Burke. In the begininng it had been fun. It's nice to be born at the age of thirty-five. Mr. Burke was fresh, like a *primeur*. But after three months of an unknown person without history and having known him only in prison I wanted to be rid of him. On a hot Sunday a Belgian came up to me and asked what the English word 'released' meant. I explained it to him. He said there was a paper in the office and that word was marked beside the name of Burke. Five days later, in the company of several others, I walked out through the gate of Miranda. There was a little breeze. I can still feel it. But I can't remember what the ground was like. My feet never touched it. Next day I was in Madrid. The night of the following day I slept in Cordoba. The air was heavy with summer, and it was great to be in a bed again.

Hence, I didn't sleep. The rock of Gibraltar was covered by a cloud. On the outskirt of that cloud a plane was flying. The last English plane I had seen was over the Champs Élysées writing the word *confiance*. I had it. Now this other plane was my reward.

When those oaks of eighteenth-century English literature reached the end of their copious novels, a curious sense of being moved by the parting got hold of them. It had been fun to get well acquainted with the characters, to follow their antics, and even the reader down the vale of years had become an intimate friend. And now it was finished. The hour of parting had come. I suppose their quills trembled in their hands and the ink was a sad pool of farewell. But my emotions were different as the engines of the ship stopped and my ten months' journey from Paris to England reached its end.

For me, this book and the fourteen months I lived since the fall of France were merged into one from the start. The pain and hope were as much the written word as the adventure itself. It wasn't the modern equivalent of the quill that wrote it. I moved, stumbled and stopped through the pages. I climbed the capitals and when there came a full-stop I was the full-stop itself. I rested on the dots of the i's and I stretched myself on the crosses of the t's. Thus as I sat in the smoking-room of the ship I could hear the approaching rustle of the last page.

There wasn't much to pack and take into England with me. My luggage had shrunk to a handkerchief, which a soldier had given me in Gibraltar. But there was other kind of luggage to prove that I hadn't travelled so light. For example, the memory of Jean, the young Frenchman, who died without beholding the sight that awaited me on the other side of the smoking-room door. That piece of luggage was the symbol of thousands of other Frenchmen who died, and would die, with similar heroism, with only faith to light their end. Because the other passengers were making so much fuss at having arrived, I didn't move from my seat but turned back the pages and saw Paris at dawn with the endless, silent queues waiting, and heavy German boots marching.

A fellow passenger came in. "Come on out," he said, "here's England." I remained sitting. I knew what I was going to see on the other side. That kept me going through all the pages. A green field, peaceful, and the sky with the colours of Constable. Somewhere a barrage balloon, as a reminder that to-morrow was still in the offing. But it would come because England had stood it in the despair of 1940 and because so near to a grave of fire and

water she remained a flame of inspiration and faith rising out of the sea.

I lingered on. Time, however, was up. I rose, went to the door, opened it, fresh air rushed at me, and as I stepped out I saw I had come to the end of this book.

As a fitting postscript,
I dedicate this book to Nona,
of whose death, in New York, on 3rd December, 1941,
I heard only after the manuscript
had gone to press.