

JILL TO AL MARCH 1, 1945

Darling --

I am in the throes of a profound and happy nausea, having just eaten half of your box of Rosemary of Paris chocolates single-handed. They came the other day but I didn't get around to opening them until today and, in the great rush of letters I've been getting from you, quite forgot to mention them until today. I apologize although the signs are good -- that I still prefer your thoughts and verbalizations to any material offering from you. My God, everybody I show them to (and who eats them says they cost about ten dollars a pound) and I too have seen their ads in the New Yorker. What did you ever do that for? They are marvelous and I appreciate them very much but I have no sense about eating candy and it would be better if you didn't send me any more. Really the only time I need candy is when I am very tired and over-exercised (fortunately I've been in that condition lately, what with the laundry which I just did at the odd hour of eight in the evening), and then I'm very parochial in my tastes -- i.e., Hershey bars. This is very fancy candy -- the fillings all taste real strange and unrecognizable -- like almonds and rum and burnt something or other and cocoa butter. Some look like raspberry jam but don't taste that way. I gave a piece to Kathy and she ate part of it with mild appreciation and then didn't finish the rest. I still wonder what they put in the insides.

I spent a kind of lousy day. Kathy woke up about four this morning and kept requiring attention until I broke down and gave her a bottle. Then I couldn't get back to sleep. I was thinking about Juni King, whose letter I got yesterday and which I forgot to mention in yesterday's letter to you. Bill is being drafted this month and they are being thrown out of their house on Spaulding because some speculator bought the property and she doesn't know what she is going to do. Her adopted parents refuse to be of any assistance. She thinks she may come to Chicago and look for some kind of job where she could keep her kids with her and perhaps help out with other people's kids. It is a tough spot and I feel sorry for her. I wrote she could

stay here while I was away and while I was getting settled and also if it helped when I came back, that I could keep Leslie for a while. I'd love that -- if he is half as cute as he used to be. Meanwhile I'd written Mir she could use the apartment but she wrote back that it would be easier for her to leave Joe with Mom while she is house-hunting. Mom would prefer that Mir stay here for obvious reasons, i.e., less work for Mom. I would prefer to help out Juni in preference to anybody because she is in such a tough spot and I still can't help being grateful for the way she took me in and nurtured me that winter. Damn it, why can't the Army be a little more rational about drafting people and caring for their dependents. It just doesn't seem fair that Bill has to leave two kids stranded like that. Everybody assumes that everybody else has a family to go to, but what about all of orphans. And a woman just can't work with young children on her hands. Nor should she. Although I guess Mary must be about nursery school age by now. I keep thinking of her as a little baby still.

Today was sort of lousy. It was sunny and all that but Kathy had disturbed my sleep and I was tired all day. I tried resting this afternoon but first Oliver dropped in and then Diane. They are living apart now, deciding it was better while they are both being analyzed. I guess all that loose psyche flying around the house was too much. Diane and the baby are staying with Helen Stillman who has a little house, Oliver is living at the new dorms and they see each other and go out, just don't live together. They are silly tiresome people but I am fond of and protective of Diane, in a way. But I do wish people wouldn't drop in on me any more. It will be so nice when you come home and we can make it mandatory that people call first and make dates three weeks in advance. I must be getting old and stuffy. I just can't stand this gay bohemian social life any more and have no desire at all to make my home a salon. It just dirties up the ash trays and the talk bores me. Now Priscilla was over for supper tonight and there's a friend. I still hadn't done the wash and by God if she didn't descend into the Stygian depths of the basement with me and help me. But that's an exception. They usually just dirty the ashtrays, as I said before.

I also got a letter from Adele Rose, who can't understand why everybody is so awful when she and her friends are so nice. I think I know what she means. For the first time in her life she is in a position where she can't choose the company she keeps, where she has to schmooze with Virginia housewives when she goes outside the house (she has a little baby, you know) and listen to their dirty cheap little prejudices. I know what she means and yet I can't put my finger on it -- somewhere I feel there's something lacking in the Adele Roses of the world too. It has to do with being a good liberal (I'm not putting other aspects of Adele's character under discussion). Maybe the only social change in the world comes from violence and crime and disaster -- the gangsters who turn into the underground and back into gangsters again. The rest of us are just playing jacks.

She also said she saw Gosnell at a party and he said he had been hearing from you and that you sound satisfied with your work. You know, darling, I hope you never go back to working with him again. The world is turning inside out but I don't think he and Sam Stouffer know it, even if Sam has a job with the War Dep. I can understand your conflict between scholarship and the active life, but just because you are inclined to the former, you must want to know goodness and reason are not triumphant, why in fact they are not even synonymous with each other. There's so damned much to find out and to do that can't be discovered or done in Harper Library. Or let the others, less equipped for the world, do it. All right, I'm confused -- I distrust intellectuals (half of them don't have enough sense to vote for the right man in office) and dislike the solid middle classes and find the lower middle classes cheap and full of prejudices. And I know nothing about the people further down from there. I find the people on my block generally enlightened politically and patriotic but then, they are mostly Jews ... and therefore exceptions.

I'm sleepy too. I wish I hadn't started that long diatribe about nothing. However, I'll throw in a parting lance. There is something wrong with Adele's brand of liberalism and I don't know what it is and I think you do, but what the hell is wrong

with the intellectuals like your brother and Leites and Shils and even the way you used to be at school. Why all the non-participation in political life. I know all those men have been hatched at one time or another but that still doesn't account for the complete anomie. I think it's presumption of a sort, even worse than the presumption of Adele who thinks she's so damned nice.

Well, I'd be interested to hear what you think of all this and I'm even sleepier still now. It would be fun to talk these things over with you although perhaps it's safer that I can write them from a distance because you always used to get so mad at me in arguments whenever I got the slightest bit personal -- and your definition of personal even excluded references to your Uncle Charlie's bald spot for the purposes of argument. So maybe I'm lucky for a change, for the distance between us. But I still wish it weren't there.

I love you, see.

Jill

AL TO JILL MARCH 1, 1945

Jill, my Love,

I feel even a little lonelier today, if that be possible, addressing this letter to San Francisco, another two thousand miles away from me. But, of course, the distance really means nothing. It's the little slip of paper that counts and that is just as unobtainable now as before. We sent another man home who had been over here 28 months. He was notified one day to leave the next and was almost speechless and completely helpless the whole time. Poplar Bluff, Missouri, doesn't know what's going to hit it. He'll recover soon enough. Up to the present, the Army has been easier about sending EMs home than officers. One of the obligations of a commission I suppose. However, I'm pinning my hopes on a wide-scale relaxation of the regulations within the next couple of months. I do want to

see you so very much this Spring or summer. It will be practically unbearable without you, even, and in fact especially, if the war here is over. I really am happy that you've gone to the Coast (or perhaps I oughtn't to be so sure about you) because you've spent a hell of a long time in one place in Chicago now that I think of it. I'm very much interested in hearing how Kathy bore up during the trip and how many hearts she smote irrevocably. I haven't received the latest pictures of her which you promised to send me and hope you haven't forgotten to mail them before leaving. I would like a picture of her and little Paul together, too, if that is possible and they aren't violent enemies. It isn't surprising I suppose that we have wars when infants so early commence to dislike things & people intensely. Probably their dislikes are more rationally founded than those of adults, however.

Our army is in a rather comfortable doldrums just now. We'll probably sweep into the Reich someday, though, to everyone's satisfaction. I notice in this morning's Stars & Stripes that FDR gave out generally our boundaries in the Reich partition. We have drawn the prettiest part of the country at any rate, though the industrial parts have gone elsewhere. I honestly feel that post-war plans are going magnificently. I wish Burton Wheeler would go away and die somewhere.

I haven't had much time to read lately part of a mystery and magazine articles here & there. I have a book on public opinion which Herz sent me but it doesn't look appetizing and a couple of grammars which I ought to be studying in German and French. Not a nice environment here for the duller studies, especially lately when we've been so busy and tired. People study too much & get nowhere anyhow. If I develop into an academician, my schedule will be like this: before 8 AM anything can happen but I want my bacon done like yours and my eggs fired in butter likewise. From 8-12 I will study. From 1 to 4 I will study, if lunch permits my taking only an hour. From 4 to 5 I'll indulge in le sport, from 5-7 I'll take up your little problems one by one. From 7-8 we'll eat and the rest of the time I'll make love to you, providing you haven't got a contagious

cold, don't smear lipstick all over me and have done a good job of mixing martinis in keeping with your bravado on the subject. If this schedule isn't suitable, I'm very adaptable and will chop wood from 8-12 or just stay in bed or anything. Nothing like having concrete plans for the post-war world, is there?

Hope you like the enclosed picture. All those men in the pictures I sent you were American -I didn't say anything else, except that we have French soldiers too.

Don't fall down the street, dearest, and take good care of my Kathy. How I would like to see her.

Give my love to Paul and Ann too. I love you for all time.

Al

JILL TO AL MARCH 2, 1945 V-MAIL

Darling Al --

I don't know what I'm going to do when you come back (oh yes I do) -- I've gotten so used to spending whole evenings doing housework. It's a quarter of ten and I just finished the ironing and sweeping the floors (not with the clean clothes, as Kathy usually does in cynical imitation of my efforts). I must achieve heights of inefficiency during the day, because logically that is when all these things should be done. You'll really have to straighten all that out when you come home, since I hardly think our marital bliss will feed on my scrubbing the kitchen floors on Saturday night. Either you raise the level of my daytime efficiency or we'll have to make a trip over to the Black Belt and bag another cleaning woman. The trouble is, for one thing, the time I get up in the morning. I don't stir out of bed until Kathy starts screaming in desperation for her breakfast -- circa nine o'clock and God knows how long she has been awake before then. Then I frantically feed and change her and by the time I get myself fed and read the papers it is nearly eleven. Then I get in a great rush again, dressing us both to go out, making the

bed (i.e., folding it unmade back into the wall) reading the mail, ignoring all the desperate little people who come around to the back door, like the milkman and the diaper man, and finally stagger forth into the daylight. By the time we've aired ourselves and done the shopping it's time for lunch and we both fall back on our backs exhausted until about three PM, when it's time to go out and air again. So it's no wonder I get nothing done during the day. I suppose when you come home I'll get up earlier and accomplish all sorts of things and then go back to bed promptly after breakfast and join you there, since I can't think of any reason why you should get up at all, ever. Oh, and another thing that makes me inefficient -- without actually doing any cleaning I spend so much time all day long picking up after Kathy and remedying the damage she has wrought. I forgot to tie the drawers of her dresser today and she took everything out during one of her play periods in her room. Her favorite occupation is to take one of the drawers out entirely and then climb in and out of it endlessly, meanwhile dusting the floor with all the clothes. She is very hot on imitating me and when she can, goes flying about the house with the dust mop or the broom, stirring up the dirt, it looks funny since she is about one third the size of the implement she carries. She also has a new dance step today, stamping just one foot instead of both of them, looking for all the world like a folk dancer. She likes me to dance too, either alone -- at which time she just sits down on the floor and laughs her head off, or with her, picking her up and holding one of her hands, just like the big people. We also had a spirited game of handball today against the bathroom door. She is perfect for fetching balls that I miss, I wish we had a squash court in the basement, as I remarked to her. She didn't even mind when a wild one bounced off her head, I guess this all explains why I don't get much done during the day.

We got your bond today and thanks a lot. I hope you 'll find yourself with enough loose cash around to keeping buying them. God knows I don't. I gave ten bucks to the Red Cross yesterday and five bucks the other day for a permanent membership or whatever it was in the Independent Voters of Illinois, which seems to be pulling itself together at long last

after a period of quiescence after elections. And then there was twenty bucks to the dentist and 10 to the lad's doctor and God knows how much the man who was dealing with my sinuses will request. This business of specialists is a pain in the neck. But I can't think of any way to solve the problem of medical treatment for us middle class civilians. I wanted to join Civil Med once but they wouldn't take me then because I was anemic and now I've decided that I don't like the doctors down there anyway. For one thing the Viennese above me whom I dislike so much is the ear specialist down there and I wouldn't go to him if my ears were dropping off. I guess the only solution is to stay healthy, which I am trying very hard to do, despite the temptations from Rosemary of Paris way.

Just a week from tonight we'll be on our way to the coast. I'm trying hard not to think of it, the thought of the train ride frightens me so. But anyway I don't have to do any housework on the train although I'll probably be run ragged chasing Kathy up and down the aisles. And when I get there we'll have fun. No matter how much I have to help Ann, and I fully intend to, it won't be the same as having the responsibility for one's own house all the time. And the weather will be warm and Kathy and I will be able to take walks without freezing to death, as we do here. I seem to mind the cold more now than I did last winter. I think by this time of the year one's frame is so shattered from steeling oneself against the cold that one just can't take the cold any more.

I wish Kath would learn to kiss instead of biting. She is always biting me and it hurts and I don't know what to do. She waits around until I start putting on my socks and then she runs up and takes a big bite out of my foot, and when I am holding her she will throw her arms around my neck and I will say "kiss" in my most loving and cheerful tone, and she will sink her teeth into my jaw so that the marks last for hours. If I yell she thinks it is funny and will do it again, and if I bite her back she thinks that is funny too. Last summer when Joe was here he kissed everybody very nicely and I don't see why the hell she can't do it too. And the trouble is she has such big teeth. It's all your fault

and that's why I am complaining to you.

The news is good but I periodically get so tired of listening and waiting that it just runs over my head. The trouble is that we all know that it will be a fight to the end - no longer can we cherish visions of a sudden collapse. So now, even when the news is good, one must still keep waiting. I figure we will be lucky if you are home by the beginning of next winter. All one can do is lie back and let time wash over one and forget about growing old and having more babies. At least I have the consolation that you are relatively safe now and that the chances of your coming back to me whole and alive are very good indeed. At least I hope they are. I wish there was some way I could agitate for a leave. When I had the flue I almost hoped it was something serious and apparently (not actually) fatal so that I could get you home. But that wasn't very practical, was it? I guess I must love you very much, why I don't know, you snapper of big teeth. But I do. OOOXXX

Jill

AL TO JILL MARCH 2, 1945 V-MAIL

Dearest Jill,

Your letters of Feb. 17 and 19 arrived this afternoon late and I don't feel nice at all on at least three scores. For one thing I am sorry if I led you to feel uneasy about taking the trip West. I believe my last letters should clear that up. With the exception of having Kathy, dear Kathy, I DO feel that your waiting is harder than mine because I at least have been moving around more, and thus I am sincerely happy if you are having a wonderful time in SF. But secondly, I am worried about your being ill. I don't know what has happened by now, whether you are recovered, whether you have postponed your trip or what. I only know that I am miserably sorry for you and wish I could do something to ease your discomfort. I wish I could take care of you. Thirdly, you imply in your amusing -- ha ha -- summary of

our finances that my motive is to tighten your purse strings. If true, you are completely mistaken. My motive is only to know in what nooks the family assets lie. Where the hell are the War bonds kept, under Kathy's pillow? Or don't you know yourself. It seems to me that the least you can do is to jot down those simple facts for my knowledge. Sometimes you are pretty damned silly, if you'll pardon my reference to you in somewhat unendearing terms.

I can even add a fourth score. You ought to be thankful I write optimistically. You may appreciate gloominess in a movie which you can shake off in a banana split half an hour later but when it becomes part of your life, baby, it's an entirely different proposition. If you look upon it as annoying cheerfulness, you don't deserve more than to be annoyed. If you were obsessed perhaps with searching out the optimistic portions, you would be more impressed with some of the more somber things I've written you in the last couple of years. What do you expect me to do because I can't accomplish what I want most to do, to be with you, - commit suicide? Do you expect me to write epics of martyrdom when millions are more martyred than I? I would no more do that than expect you to complain about your being rationed at home. Or at least, if I felt that way, I would be a little ashamed to reveal it brazenly in words and actions. Clear? No. Well, anyway, I love you as much as even your demanding heart could desire, and if it is starry-eyed optimism to say that it won't be very long before I can make precious love to you, I'll stand by that, too.

Don't think that I'm not taking into consideration your illness. I wouldn't be surprised if, with 102 of fever, you confined yourself to drawing a skull and crossbones and mailed it to me. I can only see say, in defense of what I write to you, that my thoughts form themselves like a Shakespearean sonnet, that from the bulk of despondence and disagreeableness emerges the final antithesis when I think of you and surge with elation.

Many tender kisses,

Al

JILL TO AL MARCH 3, 1945

Darling --

Saturday

Kathy has some transient mal de mer and is just dropping off to sleep and I don't want the typewriter to bother her. She has whoopsed several times today and didn't eat much but was otherwise in good spirits. Like a fool I didn't take her temperature and had her out most of the day. She was her usual vivacious self I might add. Then when I was putting her to bed tonight I took it and it was 102. I was horrified but remembered that babies shoot up and down like that, with little provocation. She woke up about an hour ago (it's 10:30 now) and has been playing quietly in her bed. I feel the way I did when she was a little baby. I've been busy all night sterilizing things, boiling milk and making jello, which is recommended for unwell stomachs. I'm not worried though because she is acting so nicely and is obviously free from pain or rash.

I was awfully busy during the day too, washing out all the soiled bedding and mopping floors. I walked a lot this afternoon and it doesn't seem as if I've sat down once all day. Fortunately I feel fine, full of the old vinegar. But life seems to be a succession of minor malaises and indefinite plans. I'm supposed to take her up north tomorrow because Ed is in town and it will be the last time I'll see the family, except for Mom, before we go. Now I don't know what we'll do.

I decided it wasn't such a good idea writing on the back of that page. I didn't realize how much the ink would show through. Kathy is definitely not going to sleep. Instead she is singing a little song to herself, perhaps "the Sorcerer's Apprentice" which she listened to with great interest. She seems to like so-called Classical music as much, if more than the more primitive rhythms of jazz. Gosh I hope she keeps it up. I don't know whether my low-grade interest in music is the result of an inherent lack or just some psychological state induced by anti-authoritarian sentiments. But I miss not being able to play or listen intelligently and without pushing, want Kathy to have this enjoyment I've so largely missed.

I'm getting awfully sleepy. I wish we could spend this Saturday nite together, no mad going about but just climbing into bed after a hard day with the funny papers -- and each other.

I love you so, darling.

Jill

AL TO JILL MARCH 3, 1945 V-MAIL

My dear Love,

I thought I might as well address a note to what was our humble home before you abandoned it for California, just in case you broke a leg, caught pneumonia or otherwise failed to keep your bargain with the Pullman Co. The last two letters before this one I addressed directly to Paul's place in S.F. Hope you got or get them. The weather has turned colder and we had a marvelous supper of pork loin, sauerkraut & boiled potatoes with gravy. That was the day, plus a lot of work and many kind thoughts of you even the while I fume at your financial stupidity and your shrieking complaints about life. I pray that you are well by now. You must absolutely keep yourself well if you want me to go ahead and win this damned war. Damn the PX Spec. Ser., camp shows, radio, Stars & Stripes & the whole lot of morale boosting activities. All I need to know is that you still love me and are well. What a shocking confession of love to make! I shouldn't be so bold. Many kisses to you and old Kathy.

Always your

Al

JILL TO AL MARCH 4, 1945 V-MAIL

Darling --

The great conflict between Kathy's indisposition and our previous appointment on the north side was removed by our

going to the north side. Ain't it always the way? After a long painful Sunday bus and IC trip we got there about two, had just enough time to look at a lot of old photographs and gas around with the boys, then Kathy went to sleep. We started to eat and then she woke up and was terribly fussy. So I gulped down the rest of my food and took her home. All in one afternoon. She doesn't have a fever but does have diarrhea and altogether doesn't act like her usual sharp self. I wish I could have stayed home but I've disappointed Mom so many times about going up there -- and always with a good reason I hasten to add -- that I just couldn't this, my last weekend in town. Besides I always like to see Ed. But damn it, will we spend the rest of our lives on the Addison St. bus? I can remember that long ugly journey being a source of conflict between us in the past and some day the great divide between the north and the south side will have to be reconciled. We should all move to Alaska perhaps. And damn it, it is always a beautiful day when I do go there and I hate like hell to hang around the house trying to work up an appetite for dinner when I've just eaten breakfast. I always feel stuffy for days afterwards. Cooney keeps knocking Kathy down. He is really very fond of her and seems to have gotten over being jealous, which is remarkable for that neurotic hound.

Now I'm just tired and don't have a thought in my head that wasn't there yesterday or a week ago yesterday. I haven't even had time to read the newspapers although somehow tidings of great Allied victories are seeping through my befuddled brain. Mom now announces that you will be home in June. She gave up the notion that March was the month only reluctantly. As I have pointed out before I have long ago given up the optimistic game of guessing when and will only take bets now when I am accentuating the negative. It's much better to bet that way than some boobies I know, who will plunk down a half a C on the theory that the war will be over spring of 1942. Because this way even if you lose you win -- since obviously I wouldn't care about losing half a C if the war was over May 1st, which is the date on my bet with Dieter Dux.

Christ, I just remembered. I have laundry in the basement and if

I don't pick it up now the people who wash on tomorrow, Monday, morning, will be beating around on the back door about seven. So I'd better end this note which was at best, the work of an ill-natured and fatigued girl. I say girl advisedly because when I got on the crowded southbound Addison St. bus this afternoon I heard a man remark to his mate, "Aren't the girls having babies young these days." That is the result of letting my hair grow out in the manner of Hairless Joe, so that you couldn't see my wrinkles even if I had them, so well protected is my face from the gaze of fools.

Darling, take care of yourself and come home soon, so I can simultaneously lose and win all my bets. I love you.

Jill

AL TO JILL MARCH 5, 1945

Dearest Jill,

I'm going to start this letter bright and early in hopes of making it nice and long by this evening - a few minutes here & there is about all I can manage despite my intense desire to do nothing but think of you, plot ways of getting to you and mooning over what will happen when I succeed in that ambition.

The reason I wrote not last night was that the Crossman brothers were in to pass the night. Dick is a top-flight Paris man of about thirty-five whom I knew in Africa. His brother is much more quiet and has been with our company throughout the French show. He came to say good-bye and collect his belongings since he has been transferred to an idyllic post in London as a member of some British Commission. We talked well into the night about future plans. A G-2 colonel joined us for supper and added to the Intelligent discussion, abetted by a bottle of Hennessy Cognac Dick had brought along. With Crossman leaving us we shall have no Englishman at all along except a sergeant. I ought not to forget Yurka, Prince Galitzine, however, who drops in frequently enough on his roving

missions.

I am still sweating out your influenza, my darling. The last two days have been bereft of mail from you. There isn't much I can do save sympathize lamely. I ought to be where I might kiss you again and again, perhaps to compensate a little for the intense discomfort. I would certainly feel better, whether you were bothered or not. It always made me feel better to kiss you and hold you to me. I don't supposed any man is so strong that he can't derive strength from that, or at least a visceral release from pain. I think if I were home I might crawl in bed with you only if to have you help me feel less bad about feeling bad over you. At once my source of weakness and strength. Please love me as I love you. Please, darling, be patient with these crippled, tortured months. They're moving towards their doom and our happiness. And they can't avoid either.

Later in the afternoon. I've borrowed a pen until I either find mine which was lost in the last couple of days or receive the one you so thoughtfully have sent me (I hope). Meanwhile I have received two letters from you, Jan. 20 and Feb. 19, the last the latest. I am very, very happy that you're feeling somewhat better and that Mom's been able to help you out. She's a wonderful nurse - cheerful without being professionally or artificially so, considerate and extremely capable. In my boyhood it was sometimes a pleasure to be sick. For one thing (Oh, Sigmund!) I was allowed to recover in the big, comfortable bed of my parents, instead of the gloomy one away from the center of activity, that Buzz and I shared.

Instead of posing for an amateur badly, why don't you go to a more experienced photographer for pictures. I'm sure it's less trouble and the results ought to be excellent. I'm sure the girl that took your pictures the last time was an amateur even though she charged you such terrible prices. If I were there, I'd spank her immature fanny with the back of her flash pan. At any rate, if I was enthusiastic about them now, you can readily see that it will be an honest opinion.

You don't mean to say that you opened Kathy's mail. Can't she

have any privacy at all? That will be my angle for turning her against you when she grows up. And then when she swims the crawl better than you, you will be frustrated and jealous.

A mobile Red Cross truck stopped by the other day and gave us lots of doughnuts. Wasn't that thrilling? You could make better doughnuts any day in the week. Don't say you can't. And besides you're a lot prettier & who the hell wants doughnuts anyway. That's the way I feel about Perlman, too. Who wants Perlman when I have you.

This is too much! I just got a good letter from you dated Feb. 24, only nine days away from me, and giving me the retort courteous on four letters of mine ending on Feb. 12. Supper is over now. The men are being paid for Feb., a little late, but Lt. Osiecki was unable to get back to pay off sooner. He only arrived a couple of hours ago, very tired and happy to be back. In the Army, in case you're puzzled, one officer, usually the junior is appointed Class A Finance Officer & only he can pay off.

Thanks, my Love, for the synopsis of my sartorium. It's nice to know amidst all of this that I am a man possessed of three suits, even though only one is any good at all. Sometimes you are too unromantic. Suppose I like to see an old familiar shirt. What then? Won't you let me. You ought to abet anything that makes one's memory more exact. All I could remember before was a vague, dark closet with some of my clothing in it.

"They really were bad

So don't be mad."

Who said they were good?

So long as they stood

My own unkhakilike array

In disarranged peace

Of inferior fleece

Woman, spare that shirt!
If you want something to hurt
Try selling all those shoes*
That a beggar'd refuse.

(*Including those moccasins)

On shoes, Happy Birthday and I am more than delighted to have their payment consummated in my name.

About Durante, we love him here too. Tom Crowell, Old Vaudevillian, especially, is his ardent admirer. He's been running around imitating Jimmy the last couple of days because he just got some new equipment and is too happy to restrain himself.

Give my best to all. For Kathy a kiss made on her chubby cheek. And all my love to my only Jill.

Al

JILL TO AL MARCH 7, 1945 V-MAIL

Al darling --

Two days have passed since I last wrote you (Sunday and today is Wednesday), that makes three days, I guess, but only two without writing if you get what I mean), during which time I got two letters from you, Feb. 22 and 25, and a fine case of the GI's. What Kathy had I caught and now we are moaning and groaning about the house again, although we both feel somewhat better tonight. I took her to the doctor yesterday and he said it was a common form of intestinal flu and told us both to take paregoric. Isn't it a pain, though, all this illness? I never was sick before, from the time I was nine years old, until this winter. I wonder what the reason can be. Could it be psychological -- added to the rank weather of course -- my life being cluttered up with so many unimportant people all making

demands on my time, and having no one to make decisions for me (like whether to bring the baby up north, on Sundays). I wish to hell I never had to make another decision again in my life. Of course in our present condition I have no intention of making that train ride starting Friday night. I cancelled it and will probably fly next Wednesday instead. Flying is more risky in a way but it is almost worth the chance of being bumped to get there so quickly and painlessly. For the past few days I've almost been ready to throw the whole thing up but on the other hand, I think the change may break the monotonous chain of sickness and distemper we've both had. It's hard as hell taking care of Kathy under these conditions. Every two minutes she was whooping or sheissing and in the intervening moment I would be doing it.

This is just the kind of letter they tell us civilians not to write to the quote boys overseas. In fact the only virtue it has is that it's on v-mail. And tonight over the radio I was listening to the most gruesome melodrama about red-headed women feeding discharged veterans Miceys and then taking their wallets for the discharge pay. So watch out. (I was going to make some humorous and specific allusion to my cooking but my stomach rolled over and I realize that ginger ale and Colgate's toothpaste is about the limits of my diet right now, figuratively or literally.) I am getting thin and my legs are beautiful. The rest of me doesn't matter anyway because my hair manages to cover it all, it really does look blonder than that greasy dark brown lock of hair would indicate. It has something to do with its picking up lights en masse. I guess. Kathy in the last few days, beside whooping, has manifested two important physical and behavioral changes. Her hair is getting wavy and she doesn't bite so hard when she kisses. In fact she kissed me today and it was really a kiss, mouth wide open, tongue hanging out, hot milky breath blowing against the side of my nose. It was charming. Kathy has the prettiest hair now, soft, and brown and as I said, sort of curly. I hope it stays that way and doesn't get so coarse and bushy like the hair in my family. She still persists in looking very much like a De Grazia, specifically you and your Dad. Her nose turns up, and is also somewhat bent, having

been fell on out of the high chair yesterday (everything happens to us the day we go to the doctor. Last time she fell out of her buggy when we had an appointment). It seems as if in all the pictures I send you she always has the same expression -- her face screwed up against the sun -- which prevents you from seeing how truly pretty she is, with her big brown eyes (and the whites are white, not bloodshot, like some big brown eyes I know) and her great mouth hanging open. Sometimes I wish she weren't so pretty and so bright. I feel as if I'm in custody of some fancy high-priced porcelain and the responsibility for its breaking is more than I can bear. And that's my neurosis, brother.

Juni King arrived in town with the two kids and called me. She is staying with her wicked foster parents but is naturally anxious to get out as soon as possible. She is coming over tomorrow with the kids and then I'll let you know more. Bill was inducted a few days ago but she hasn't heard yet where he is. Poor Juni has a tough life -- and I complain! She would be a fine person to double up with if I had a house or could find one because her children are so wonderful and just the right age -- not too young, but Juni personally bores me stiff. I mean, she's intelligent and all that, just not very urbane I guess.

You know, I've been chasing that Deanna Durbin picture for ages but it never shows up, The Picadilly will invariably show a Betty Grable musical in preference to a good melodrama. Remember the plot and enact it for me when you get home. I am very fond of Gene Kelly, undoubtedly because he is the same type fella you are, dark and human looking, to be distinguished from the great apes. (I don't think you like me to discuss your appearance so I won't say more.)

The night is seeping in through the window, heavy with the smell of boiling lard from the stockyards. You don't get that smell often around here but when you do, it really stinks. And I don't even have the window open. Jesus, what a lousy city this is. Monday it was around sixty in the sun and yesterday it was blowing and sleeting and today it is just plain damned cold. And

the more you get of it, the more you shiver. There's no such thing as getting used to it, the way they do in Canada or Alaska.

Did I tell you Diane and Oliver were separated (so strong is my resistance to the idea I can't even spell the damned word). I can't remember if I wrote you or Day about it. Anyway, Diane is living with Helen Stillman in a house over on Greenwood, the other side of the Midway, and Oliver is living in one of the new dorms. They are both being analyzed and I guess it made living together difficult. Oh, Liza is living with Diane, needless to say. I should imagine they'll get together some day again, however.

I think I'll go drink some more ginger ale. God how I miss you. Do you really drink all the whiskey straight? Are you going to do it when you get home? I don't know why I should object except that I may get into the habit too and that wouldn't be good at all. Anyway I don't like the taste. I haven't had a drink in months, the phoney single martini at the Chez Paris being the last drop of alcohol to pass these lips. And I can't say I feel any better for it.

I love you.

Jill

AL TO JILL MARCH 7, 1945 V-MAIL

Jill, My Darling,

I seem to imitate your bad habits faithfully. How else would I have this bitch of a cold and feel like hell generally. And right in the midst of a worrisome problem. I took a long nap this afternoon and feel better now. I've taken some aspirin and sip at a bottle of old cough medicine Wallengerg has been carrying around with him now and then. All in all, I'm not in too sorry a state, yet. You ought to be on the train this very minute grumbling your way to San Francisco. Until I hear so definitely, however, I'll be addressing my letters partly to our Chicago address and partly to the Far West. The news, of course, is fine. Patton is confirming my belief that he really is a master at the

use of armor. I wish I were riding along one of those steely fingers instead of waiting for the results to be manifested. I imagine they must be seeing a lot of astonished faces along the way.

Are you silly. If we win the war before June or May, you will be taking the Bourbon out of your husband's mouth. From what I hear of conditions at home, you'll have a hard time replacing that lost wager by another bottle before I happen along thirsty as hell. You mentioned that you received my request for some book. Here's a request for another one, Katherine Porter's latest to which I saw a reference somewhere, not the "Laughing Judas". I'll be sending you that and several others I'm through with one of these days. I wrote Hans Danenberg today, not neglecting to brag about Kathy. You have done a fine job with her, from all I can tell. It's just as well I wasn't around. With the head start in child development you have had with her, it is doubtful whether I'll ever be able to take an active hand with the rest of our children. In every discussion, you'll simply point to Kathy and toss off my intellectual points with an airy wave of the hand.

Did I write you about how fine a movie When Strangers Marry was? I meant to. It ranked with the best I've ever seen in acting and direction. No coincidences that the actors were unknown. To be famous in Hollywood is almost to be ham. There were masterful touches of incidental conversations - the colored policemen as the couple walked by them and all sort of suggestive things that made the movie more than a mere visual sensation as the ordinary Hollywood product tends towards. I've certainly been seeing many movies this winter. The mess sergeant has made a great hobby of badgering special service officers and putting on movies. Then too we've been sharing movies with an infantry company which is sharing the village and that gives us twice as many as otherwise would be obtainable. Still, as long as I can't have your company to a movie, it isn't near as nice as it might be. No one I've met yet can cooperate in the post-mortem so well as you, as well as contribute to the general pleasantness afterwards. You're my

girl and you had better not forget it. I'm even meaner if anything,

A most tender kiss to you.

Always

Al

JILL TO AL MARCH 9, 1945 V-MAIL

Darling Al --

Every time I hear one of those fatuous ex-lax commercials on the radio a sardonic smile (risus sardonicus) curls around my otherwise clenched lips. Oh, the joys of having the GI's! Kathy is over hers and we spent an otherwise pleasant day. Our appetites are coming back and we took a long walk over to Diane's new lodgings at 61st and Greenwood and then she came back with us and we had an early supper at Stineway's, just for the laughs. Kathy dived into my mashed potatoes and kept screaming because I wouldn't give her any of the tough steak I was eating. She attracted quite a lot of attention, including that of Mickey Maguire, who was in having a coke. I don't know that Mickey knows who I am or that I am your wife. Anyway, Kathy finally decided to get down and make a tour of the drugstore and went over to Mickey and said "Hi," the way she does to everybody who will look at her. She was covered with milkshake and potatoes and looked just the way all the babies who ever made by stomach turn before motherhood came my way looked. I would have liked to have told Mickey she was your baby so that she could properly evaluate the course of life she has chose, i.e., a career vs. motherhood. Kathy is swell propaganda, but in which direction I hesitate to guess.

Tomorrow I have to go down and see about my plane ticket. Boy, am I glad I'm not on that train tonight. I would be in fine shape. The more I think of it, the more sensible flying seems to be. Even if one does get bumped, the excitement of it all is worth it. At least there's no chance of being bored to death, the

way one is on a train. And the seats are so comfortable. We really had a pleasant ride, didn't we, from San Francisco last time. But then it's always fun traveling together, although I didn't enjoy the coach to New York so much. It was very hot as I remember. Gee those v-mail forms are short.

I am busy all the time now, trying to keep the mess from accumulating before I go. As a result I am relatively content with my lot and spend a lot of time thinking about you, about when and how you will come home and the things we will do together. You know, darling, sometimes late at night (late being ten-thirty in these quarters) when I am wandering around the house I talk to myself. What a confession. But I am really talking to you. I complain about the milk (which I am constantly drinking) in a jocular fashion and discourse on the joys (or horrors, depending on how I feel) of taking a night bath, just the kind of late-night small talk we might have together. Of course I don't do it enough to call the wagon, if that's what you're thinking. And it's funny, I'm not really lonely at nights any more. I have no desire to go out or have people in. I just want you around but at the moment I'm not in the stage where it's extremely painful. This is really a tribute to our love -- that, now that most of the sturm und drang of our separation is past -- the pregnancy, the young infancy, the disappointments of no victory last fall and the counterattack -- I can still want and love you so much. Of course as Joe pointed out, I spend so much time thinking about my digestion I don't have any left over to get depressed in. That may be so too. But I still claim to love you beyond all reason or hope. More tomorrow.

Jill

JILL TO AL MARCH 10, 1945 V-MAIL

Darling --

Today I got a letter from thee, written in verse both rhymed and free. And that's as far as I will go. Oh, and it was writ on Feb.

27, my sister's birthday. What a coincidence. I forgot to tell you, not that it's at all important, I bought her a pair of bedroom slippers for her birthday and I trembled with apprehension while I was doing it that the Field's salesgirl would peek over the counter and then start bellowing, "What do you mean, size 5. Them are nines if I ever saw any," but she didn't.

I was downtown again today for a brief span. Ed had borrowed my suitcase and since I need it for the projected trip next week (the airlines still can't tell me until the day before whether I will be leaving on the 15th) Dad brought it down to the Loop and I met him there, around five. I left Kathy with Lettie. For once I looked respectable, hat, stockings and new shoes and I guess he was so overwhelmed he took me into the Palmer House and bought me a Martini ... It was lots of fun. We sat over a little table and discussed Vic's musical education and the musical careers of you all. Vic wants to join the union so he can play this summer and Dad agrees to that but is naturally much against the idea of Vic's making it a career. He says Vic doesn't think his marks are good enough to get him to college but Dad will make him go if it kills him and I think he is right. Vic has a good mind but is terribly educated. Then we strolled down Michigan Avenue, a stunning couple, and who should we bump into but Bill and Priscilla Bergquist, on their way to or from orchestra hall. Bill is much taken with Priscilla and it is a credit to her that she likes him. He is very unworldly which would diminish his appeal to many girls, namely me, but has many and unusual good qualities. I don't know what it says about me that I like somewhat more fiendish type characters, namely and guess who.

I got home around six and Kathy was going insane from hunger. It suddenly dawned on her that she hadn't eaten for nearly a week and all of a sudden she is insatiably hungry. Around 4:30 this morning she woke up and I heard her cry and I leaped out of bed with fear in my heart, thinking she had whooped or something. I couldn't get her to go back to sleep and worried and stewed until finally I got the brilliant idea of proffering her a plate of oatmeal. She gorged herself and went back to sleep

and woke up this morning later, just as hungry. And equally all of a sudden she is quite willing to drink her milk out of a glass. The doctor had bawled me out for not breaking her of the bottle before and I had been experimentally giving her milk out of a glass in the afternoon for a few weeks but today all day she's taken it out of a glass. The amazing thing is that she holds the glass herself. Occasionally she tips it too far and it goes down her underwear and then she looks annoyed and rubs her chest tentatively. And she feeds herself with the spoon brilliantly. I can just leave her with a dish and she goes right ahead. The only thing is that she uses her left hand. She can use her right hand too but it doesn't work as well. Well, I'm proud she's so unusual. I'd be proud if she used her foot, I guess. She is really advanced, I think. Don't you?

I'm hungry again too and feeling very well, albeit tired.

I'll send you Koestler and that other book you asked for. You know, the Literary Guild, which I ordinarily loathe, has such a good selection of books this month that I may join. They have that Glenway Wescott thing, Apartment in Athens, which I'm anxious to get. I read the Pilgrim Hawk by him when it was running in Harper's Magazine and he is really a superb stylist. And their book dividend is the Beard HGisotyr you once told me to get for the boys. The only thing is that you have to buy four books in one year from them and they usually have such junk. However, the other books they have for this month are a Thurber one, and he is wonderful so that at least would make two we could buy without feeling like the people who purchase living room spots, pictures on the wall included. They also have the new Richard Bright book which I can considerably less anxious to get. Of course if I do join I'll do the socially unpardonable and give my name as Mrs. Jill etc. because as I recall, Alfred J. etc. is not in such good repute in Guild circles. Or did you fix things up behind my back? I have no conscience about that incidentally, so do not take the above as an implied criticism. (Don't worry, brother, when I criticize, I criticize.)

I am having a good time reading Pickwick Papers, which I

bought in the modern library edition. It is my first venture into Dickens and I realize it's not typical. But it's the pleasantest Dickens one could find at this time, when I have a taste for the light and satirical touch. You know, dear, after my happy experience with the scarves, it occurs to me to ask you if the New Yorkers you get are the regular kind, with all the advertising in, or is it a special overseas edition. I was under the impression it was the latter, and wonderful as the text of the magazine is, I know I should miss the advertising.

This is Saturday night and contrary to the popular song, I don't find it the loneliest night in the week. I'm glad to be alone and writing to you. I only wish those dirty Viennese upstairs weren't having company, making the night hideous with their guttural chants, so I could slide into the in=~~=~~a-door and go to sleep now. As it is, I have two alternatives: to wait until their company goes home and go to bed or to go into Kathy's room and sleep. I shall probably do the latter if I can put on the light and read a while without waking her up. The only thing is that their little boy who uses the bedroom right above her room wakes up early Sunday morning and plays the clarinet. Play is hardly the word. He masturbates it (oh Jill, you're awful).

Why didn't I think of that before: I just conceived a brilliant idea of beating the noxious murmur from above. The radio. Now I have a concert on that can be heard from here to New York.

Oh, darling, how I pray you'll be home soon. The news is good but there really isn't any good news until you come home. All my love to your.

Jill

AL TO JILL MARCH 11, 1945

Good evening, my cheerful lily,

I am afraid that they may carry out their threat of sending only V mails by air, but I can't believe that you would ever be able to

read this type if it were on a v mail form, and I am unwilling to write in long hand because the letter would be too short. Etc. As usual, I have spent more time ruminating over the problem than it is worth. I cut into the salami this afternoon and am still, at this middling hour of the evening, belching it up pleasantly, despite all attempts of a supper of army stew to squelch it. I've done a good job on a lot of fancy cookies Mom sent me too since yesterday when they arrived. We ate them during a poker game last night along with a bottle of Mirabelle which we pried out of the farmer's wife on the promise of a bottle of Vrai cognac at a future date when it arrives. I won about eight dollars or so, enough to buy baby a pair of shoes if I were near anyplace that sold baby shoes. We finished playing about midnight, drawn and tired. Today has been a lazy day for the most part. There wasn't a lot to do and I got around to reading some of that Cannery Row you sent me. It's a lot of fun, as you know. He writes so easily. Again I notice faint trace of Saroyanisms, as for example when the grown men are making their little shack livable. His descriptions of fish are wonderful. I know you must have enjoyed them, the descriptions, not the fish. I haven't had a good fish dinner in a long time. Once a week I shall have a good bass steak preceded by blue points après.

I read of couple of copies of the New York Herald Tribune today; we have a company subscription that arrives two or three days late. I like it much more than the Stars and Stripes, even though the latter has a certain amount of neutrality about it. The Trib is so much more adult, it has Walter Lippmann, and it can comment openly on all the vital issues. And it says very little about veterans, benefits, and the grievances of the servicemen, topics I am heartily sick of, whatever my position towards them be. The S and S has lots of the evils of the typical college newspaper. So the paper from Paris is welcome. It's the old problem. If you think you can say anything about a controversial problem and avoid propaganda at the same time, you are attempting the impossible. The usual result is hypocrisy or vacuity. The S and S tends towards the latter, necessarily omitting a great deal of the analysis and detail indispensable for understanding a thing like Franco-Allied conflicts, Polish

frontiers, and strikes.

Incidentally, your pen works very well and has those fine bold lines I like so well, like yours. Damn you for not sending any pictures. You do seem curious to know what I'm doing about my raise. Shall I give you the same "amusing" answer you gave me? You mean you haven't seen the war bond I said I might be purchasing? You wouldn't remember to tally it anyway. And I have all sorts of petty expenses, you know, what with drinking, gambling and new QM tailored clothing.

In fact my level of humour is so surprisingly low at the moment that I think I'll be able to stand even a few minutes of Laurel and Hardy who are playing in the mess hall tonight. As you can plainly see, there isn't a hell of a lot to say here, save that I love you and live constantly on the thought that I may see you again soon.

Always,

Al

JILL TO AL MARCH 12, 1945 V-MAIL

Darling --

I just preceded this with a touching typed note to the milkman, telling him of my departure, which is now imminent and settled. The airlines made me a reservation for Thursday. It is a weird thing -- first to LA and then to San Francisco. They said I had a better chance of getting there that way. I'll have about four hours' wait or more in the LA airport but as I recall it's a nice one and at the worst, we can only lose one night's sleep as against three on the train. Today is Monday and I am in a tizzy of last minute chores -- cleaning and hauling clothes back and forth from the cleaner. And I am also terribly tired. I've been waking up about four in the morning and then not being able to get back to sleep until six, and then just when I am sleeping deliciously Kathy is up about 7:30 (she has revised her sleeping

plans again) shouting rudely for her huge breakfast.

I didn't write you last night for that very reason -- that I was tired. Priscilla was over for most of the day and we started to make chocolate pudding, a huge amount of it too, in the glass saucepan and by God if the damned thing didn't explode. She decently took Kathy out for a long walk but it took me the whole damned afternoon to clean up the stove and the kitchen. No casualties, except my disposition. Today I sweated some more and then Mir, who arrived yesterday with Joe, came over in the afternoon. She is in a frenzy of househunting, poor girl. She has decided to stay up north with Mom because, leaving Joe there during the day so she can better devote her time to apartment hunting than if she had to take care of him down here. It was fun seeing her and we took a little walk and had a beer in the neighborhood before she went up north again. Then I walked and shopped more with Kathy. Kathy spilled a whole loaf of sliced bread over 53rd St. and then screamed bloody murder because I wouldn't let her pick it up and eat the grimy slices. She is beginning to develop a gift for tantrums -- Coocoo number 2. So it's no wonder that I greet the end of the day with relief and fatigue combined.

I got a letter from Liz today. Bill is with the 3rd Marine Division on Iwo Jima. I honestly don't know how she stands it, knowing where he is and the horrors of that campaign. Thank God it is nearly over and I read with relief that the 5th Division is doing the mopping up operations. Maybe he will be safe from here on in. She says she always sends him my letters to her. It will make me feel very self-conscious the next time I write to her. And I got a little letter from you today too, March 3, saying you'd sent some previous ones on to San Francisco. I trust that you are merely joking when you refer to my financial stupidity. I honestly don't know what I'm doing wrong. And I feel ashamed if I sound complaining, but at least I don't do it about the obvious things like meat and cigarette shortages, the current *bête noire* of many citizens. I found two Hershey bars in the dime store today, happy day, and sent one to Joey and just ate the other with relish. What is there about a Hershey bar that makes it so

incomparably beautiful to behold and to eat? They're just like you -- wonderful and scarce. Your German books came today. Thank Goodness you included something I could read, the Huxley, which I'm reading now.

OOOXXX

Jill

AL TO JILL MARCH 12, 1945

Jill, my dear Love,

You needn't say another word about Kathy after these pictures I've gotten today. If ever beauty, charm, and intelligence were mixed up and served, you have it there. "What enormous eyes" it is my turn to say and such beautiful depth of color, what lips and what a complexion. I was astounded by her size. She seems to be enormous, completely beyond my powers of imagination during the months between picture. No wonder you have such a time with her and are beginning to call more and more for my assistance. But I'm beginning to feel that I wouldn't be competent to handle her myself. No use your telling me she's friendly. I've heard that said too often about monstrous dogs and bears. I'll love her, but at a respectful distance unless she's sleeping. She's probably picked up that "I'll walk alone" business from the song of the same name. After all, she's young yet. She'll learn soon enough it's no fun to walk alone, and as for being fed, she probably is out to plaster the walls and have a little fun. Like you, however, I'm edging more towards this hereditary school. She does imitate me in my most peculiar traits and that without ever having had the great good fortune of observing me in action. She certainly looks a lot like me, a lot better too. All in all, I'm immeasurably proud of her, and even more so of you. I'm sure too that your letters on her rank among the best child literature of all time.

And mine are the most boring, because I have very little to say that is new. The war doesn't develop nearly as nicely as a child.

It is more like a pendulum swinging back and forth on the same base. Excitation and depression fluctuate from the basic boredom. I'm sick of this little village & the piles of dung as high as the houses, the dirty scrawny geese washing themselves calmly in dirty ruts in the road, the rough-spun, broad-hipped women, the dirty, unshaven men and the stupid as stone cows. The church bell still rings nicely. It rings clear in the night. That it does. It has several notes to play on and makes the most of them. It is peaceful and when I hear it I can think of you more clearly and happily, and the seconds that beat out the hour do not of all seconds seem like wasted ones.

Another day has dawned. I didn't get to write as much as I would have liked to last night. I have been hard at work this morning from the moment I stumbled down the dark corridor leading from my room to the outside and I passed two white geese fornicating in a mud puddle to the present which is just before lunch. I received no mail this morning and that is almost a relief because I have a stack of wonderful material from you which arrived yesterday and I have barely perused it twice since then. There were long and brilliant letters from Feb. 25, 28, March 1 and March 4 plus one of Mom's. The last, like all occasional correspondence, actually gave me a better idea of your late illness. You would apparently never think of telling me that you had been ill for a week, that Kathy had been up North for three days and that Mom was down for a couple of days. Mom says all that because she is writing for history, you might say, covering a forest rather than describing each tree. I'm glad that you're well now and am of the optimistic opinion that you have by now arrived in San Francisco without mishap but with Kathy (the most beautiful baby living - what a darling! - it embarrasses me to say more). Have a very good time there and I hope that I'll be able to pick up where Frisco leaves off.

Drink of few martinis for me, eat a few steaks for me, give Ann a resounding kiss for me, blow a few licks on the tuba for me, and tell Paul I expect to be able to give him some expert advice on the skeletons of European houses. (The future architectural problem is to combine Cannery Row with Beverly Hills.)

I don't want to be bored by tales of the interesting people you meet from the United Nations either, if perchance you're there for the conference. I'm sated with Continentalism and Anglicism.

All my love,

Al

JILL TO AL MARCH 13, 1945 V-MAIL

Darling --

If leisure is a condition of Art, then this letter will rank low in the history of aesthetic objects. I'm writing it while Kathy is fooling around the tub, in between the dual monumental tasks of putting her to bed and doing the big family wash (and I hope it's the last for a month) tonight. And I want to get through with the wash before Fibber Magee and Molly, at which time I shall listen to them and clean the kitchen. Today I dashed downtown to return my railroad ticket. First I went to the Northwestern Station and they didn't want it and sent me to an office obscurely located at Adams and someplace. There I got full satisfaction and then dashed to the Palmer House to get my airlines ticket. Then I had an hour until Priscilla, who was staying with the baby, had her class, so I dashed up to the new Associated American Artists gallery at Chicago Avenue and gave it the once over. Not very exciting or educational. I had rather expected it would be something wonderful and instructive, like the Museum of Modern Art in new York or some of the exhibits they have at the Institute here but it was neither. Just a fancy promotional project, done in good taste with rather conventional exhibits. A lot of John's friend Bill Schwartz's work was presented, to give you an idea. He is a good painter but dull and uninspired I think. There was no experimental work at all, like that done by some of the people Rasable knows and has introduced me to. There?/ Why did I start that word? Mystery!

Then I came home and walked Kathy and Priscilla over to school, it was such a lovely sunny day that I couldn't resist.

Kathy played on the greensward over at school with a 10-month old little boy and they had a good time and were really relatively social for such naturally asocial beings as year-old babies. A lot of women bring their babies over in the afternoon to play on the campus, it's a nice safe sunny place and there are seats for the mothers. Gone are the students -- the baby-pushing set has taken over.

I leave the day after tomorrow and honestly I don't see how I'll get everything done. It isn't that I'm so inefficient either. It's just that there always is last-minute washing and cleaning, in the very nature of the beast. And silly hungry Kathy still gets me out of bed at four in the morning. She must wake up naturally at that time and then decide she is terribly hungry. I get up and made us both orange juice and give her swiback and back to bed she went, quite contented. I always do leap up when I hear her awake because I'm always afraid of that odd chance that she may be sick. But she is a good kid. She is getting more active by the minute and spends all her time when she is indoors running up and down the length of the apartment carrying her damned playing cards, dealing herself out full houses and hiding them behind the books. If you come home and take a favorite volume out of the shelf and find a dessicated orange peel and an ace of space filed behind it, don't blame me, it's your literary daughter. By the way I ordered the Segre thing for you but it won't be in for three weeks so I'll send it to you when I get back. I need the letter to send it, otherwise the bookstore would. I hope you don't mind the wait. I'll take Koestler with me and mail it from there. I love you.

Jill

AL TO JILL MARCH 13, 1945

Jill Darling,

Stretch out your long legs and have another letter on me. Plump another Rosemary of Paris chocolate down your round throat

and get a load *cuius cano*. I do not have a habit of drinking mirabelle every morning, for one thing. I can't find that much. And the cold weather is gone anyhow. Mirabelle is a fruit somewhere between a cherry and a prune. It is white and when distilled emerges as a lovely clear liquor, strong, with a taste much more definable than whiskey, and a rusticity reminiscent of the Kentucky hills. After you drink it, you know that, against the teachings of parents and the WCTU, there is such a good thing as good moonshine. This year there is a marked shortage of the stuff in these parts, even before the troops came, but *Votre Capitaine* manages to force a little down here and there at the behest of the villagers.

You asked about the French privations as against the Italians. There is no comparison. The Italians are much worse off in every way, clothing, food, order, and housing. The French are so used to being pitied and pitying themselves, that most of them believe they are suffering worse than anyone. The Germans treated them best of the occupied countries. And the liberators are doing the same.

I don't see anything short of a radical solution or a gigantic act of charity taking care of the Italians. Both are improbable. Nations, like people, generally in action fall short of their theories. Part of the reason is that the latter stems from the intellect while the former from the temper of people. They are too soft-hearted for the first and too hard-hearted for the second. A similar thing is true of Germany, I believe. We ought to go in there ruthlessly, to exterminate everything within the shadow of Nazism. Afterwards, the people remaining should be treated as democratic angels and given lots of constructive things to do. I'm not so confident that I would be so consistent either, even granted my conditions. I have a great deal of ambivalence towards all other nationalities and my attitudes are more averages than constants. Nor am I worse off than anyone else on that score.

You wrote that you had received that letter from Holmes and you said, with a note of horror creeping into your voice "But isn't

he conservative?" and it was as if you were saying "But isn't that a third arm sticking out?" I certainly didn't gather that he was. He most surely wasn't when I first met him and I doubt whether he has changed much. I agree with you that going from Maugham to Marquand is going from bad to worse. Barnaby is much better. Yesterday I found a book of Barnaby comics, the same one you once promised to send me but which I never got and chuckled for an hour or so over the political campaign. The dog's speech on Mr. O'Malley's record was devastating. I do believe that some of our famous comic characters can give Dickens a run for his royalties. Please save the book for me, at any rate, for I haven't had nearly enough of Barnaby. We ought to build a humour library so that we can laugh ourselves sick together, and allow only a book to enter the library that has been appreciated by an honorary committee formed by yourself, myself and perhaps Kathy if she can learn to stop laughing at everything. (Gosh, is she a beautiful baby, I repeat.)

I think I might even get myself into the company of Thurber, Perlman, Arlen, Adams, and Barnaby by taking off on your trouble fitting dresses. How well I remember indeed that your dresses are either too long or too short, or just plain irregular. That last is what I could never understand. You paid out vast sums to the most snotty dressmakers in the neighborhood from my salary of £2,10 and your quaint delusion that you were living on your own income but the seam always ran up one side and down the other, and there seemed to be no happy meeting ground between your thigh and your ankle. Also, I greet with enthusiasm but considerable doubt your statement that you had found a type of high-heeled shoe which suited you. I'll buy you a chocolate soda for each time you wear those shoes over and beyond the number of times necessary to rub off the manufacturer's imprint on the sole.

I have one ear cocked at a telephone conversation Johnny is having just now to see if he is violating security. Trying to get some things across the wire and at the same time saying nothing of possible significance is a real trial. I wish I had a recording of some of these weird conversations. Scott, who has

recently made sergeant incidentally, has worked out a complete jumble to communicate with the shell dump.

Isn't it just like Gosnell to tell somebody that I was satisfied with my work. The dumb son of a bitch ought to at least shut up. But he had to talk and when he talks he can only utter cliches unless he has had a great deal of time to prepare beforehand. For another thing, my letters to him are almost as brief as his to me and I can say even less about my work. If it came from anyone else but him it would be an insult -imagine being satisfied with this business. You shouldn't have such worries about my preoccupation with study. You needn't fear that I am falsely enamored of the campus. I can smell fraud and choose friends as well as you can, on campus as well as off. You needn't fear that I'll dig myself a hole in the stacks and forget my wife and family forever. And how you can compare Buzz with Leites and Shils is beyond me. Very unfair to Buzz. Buzz never picked up a book when he had Mir available. Of course, those other guys never had Mir available.

That last is early morning humour. And I am sour indeed.

So glum that nothing short of you could crack my set lips. All my love as always and a kiss for Kathy.

Al

JILL TO AL MARCH 14, 1945

Darling --

Here are some pictures of Kathy, taken a couple of Sundays ago. The reason there aren't any more is that the camera fell open, or succumbed to the blandishments of one Bob Schwartz, in whose buggy I had chanced to rest it, half way through the roll.

I have no time to write you now. I am looking for a cigarette somewhere in this blasted house.

Mom is here, helping me pack and lending moral support. We leave at noon tomorrow. I am all packed but uneasy. I suppose it's the cigarettes. It's awful not having them, and after having drunk coffee for dinner, just to get a nice taste in my mouth so I could smoke. I guess I will have to drink salt water and go to bed.

Kathy looks a little like Rita Hayworth, doesn't she. Or maybe Frank Sinatra.

Honey, the next letter I write you will be from California. And in only two days. Amazing, isn't it? I'm sorry this isn't a longer one but I'm awfully tired and bed is awfully tempting. Anyway there's nothing to write about except packing. I noticed in your book, Antic Hay, that it was "stolen from Jim Clark." Is he the one whose wife is suing for divorce or is that Adams. Has Clark gone home too. Is he the civilian with the family he hasn't seem? I just want to keep them all straight and have a poor memory for uni-syllabic (or virtually so) Anglo-Saxon names.

I love you darling and have a very good memory of you.

Always

Jill

Note date! and no mention of Taxation. I just ignore it and them. So that's all right?

JILL TO AL MARCH 15, 1945 V-MAIL

Darling --

Well, as I remarked to Kathy as an hour ago, we unloaded our bags and chattel in front of 5436 Ridgewood Ct., San Francisco sure is beautiful in the spring. We got as close to it as seeing the United Air Lines Mainliner winging away into the bright blue etc. Just a little matter of priority travel, as the beautiful young lady with the pancake makeup told us out at the airport. Well, it was a nice taxi ride out and the airlines paid our fare back, and

after all, Kathy has to see something of the city, doesn't she. The airlines also advised us that we didn't have a Chinaman's chance of flying this week or any other that they could see. So we arrived back here about an hour ago. Mom, who had spent the night and participated in the merry merry departure o c n b

Isn't Kathy a genius. She made those letters above? She just woke up from her nap in a very good mood. Now I feel better (that she has slept), I was stunned this morning but still not daunted. I'm going to try to catch a train out of here tonight and as long as my bags are packed I might as well try -- and if that fails, we'll just give up. Incidentally you would be amazed at the way I can pare down luggage after my experiences travelling with you. We only have two suitcases and a diaper bag that slings over my shoulder. Paul and Ann wired they have a crib for Kathy and as for a machine, well she can walk. She is making a big pest of herself now, trying to type while I am. And also opening up the desk drawers.

God it looks as if we are really doing business at the Rhine. Yet reports -- not the actual military ones but the manner in which they are phrased -- always tend to be over-optimistic. I am becoming a great student of journalistic rhetoric. I'd like to pass a law abolishing completely the use of hyperbole, metaphors and similes in military reporting. The Allies are smashing through the Rhine. What the hell does smashing mean. Does it mean that three patrols got through, that a large group of men got through but with great number of casualties, or does it mean that the enemy is in utter defeat, retreat. Search me. Yes, right down to the skin.

I was understandably depressed at the completion of Antic Hay which I did last night when I should have been sleeping. But the Huxley of that period at least was comprehensible and had a certain integrity. Now he is just hogwashy. This incidentally is the first Huxley I've read since reaching the dubious maturity I now hold to. I read Point Counterpoint when I was 19 or 20 and didn't understand a word, except those dealing with fornication. That points a lesson, but I don't exactly know what it is.

I just took Kathy out because she was bothering me so. We bought four bananas (ah, what rareties) and she is eating one now in her room and I am eating three. They are rather green and so will we be. Incidentally I just thought, my persistence in going to Cal. is of a Huxleyan sort, you might say. It is rather a symbolic gesture. I am really quite neutral about getting there now, emotionally I mean, but I am bound to make certain gestures of effort to get there, whether I do or not. Here's the end. More tomorrow. Can you bear the suspense?

All my love.

Jill

AL TO JILL MARCH 15, 1945

My darling,

I certainly would like to get your first letter from the west coast. I like to place my love in space in order to have a target for all these rays of sunshine I am wont to diffuse. Tom Crowell was looking for a picture today to use in making some test proofs on a new offset press and I gave him the one of that beautiful little girl Kathy to work on in the hope of getting some copies. If it works I'll send you several. I can use a couple myself since I have already half worn this one out, pulling it out constantly to remark and marvel on it. I really should have a good photo of you. See if you can get one done in California. Paul should be the one to do it; you always said he knew your character so well. Your photographs have a bad feature of never really revealing your character, though also I sometimes believe that your character is such that it is not for photographs to reveal. They are, after all, capable of only this or that, not both this and that. And you are both. Vague, ain't I? But I love you.

Today has been a big and beautiful day. The manure piles are absolutely in blossom under the delicious rays of the March sun. This may be spring. The Rhine may be warm enough to swim in by the time we get to it. The last time I swum in it was in 1938 in

Switzerland, at Basle. That was nice but not so nice as Lake Michigan, and I had by no means the gracious company I had in you in Chicago. You and your penchant for removing the swimming suit. As I recall, the last time we swam together there, it was off Addison street while I was on leave and you did just that after swimming out a scant twenty five yards and exciting the attention of Ed and a few others. But I won't go any further. I just want to point out how you are a constant source of embarrassment to me and it's a good thing your letters are not made public, too. As the grown-up mother of a grown-up girl, isn't it about time that you cease using four-letter words and use their Latin equivalents? Imagine my shock to come home renouncing all manly invective only to be grossly sworn at by my only daughter, the chubby little bull.

Speaking of verbal abuse, as contrasted to sexual abuse which I know absolutely nothing about, the German radio a couple of days ago said, after poor Cologne fell, that we were the "pimps of the Bolshevik murderers". The poor Kraut no longer has even a pot to do it on. Once he thought that the Russians were awful but we weren't nearly as bad. Now he is being told and believes we're as bad. He is very unhappy (chuckle, chuckle - not to be confused with 'Ha, Ha' or 'Smile') and who the hell cares. The more scared he is, the harder he fights and the harder he fights the more reason he has for being scared. You can shout out about the Righteous Wrath of Jehovah at this point, Divine Irony, and anything else, but make it loud and bloody.

I hope this talk about sending troops to the Orient immediately after the cessation of hostilities here doesn't bother you too much. It has been said that most will go by America, and it seems quite probable that the older men will get leaves very soon after the end. That's me. I'm young, but I've wanted you for all eternity.

Al

*[On the back of the letter, in Jill's handwriting: SKATING NITE!!
I'll stay with kids"]*

End of March (first of two parts) 1945 letters

