

F.A.N.Y. 5,  
A.P.O. 4,  
B.E.F.

My dearest Mother,

Here it is time to write again. The days just fly in this place, and one does not seem to have time for anything. We have been fairly busy, with trains every day, and sometimes in the middle of the night, not only Belgian, but English, French and Bosche who have lost their divisions. One English Officer that I took the other day did not even know what town he was in, absolutely lost. On Thursday General Charteris passed through on his way back to G.H>Q. so we went to Boulogne for dinner. It is such a nice change, and he is quite a dear old thing. He often comes down to the Isle, and thinks o standing in Kirkcudbright in the next election.

On Friday Moses Marples and myself went for dinner with General Radcliff here, at Base Headquarters. We had a very cheery time, and danced until 12 with a topping band, and lovely floor, and the staff are such a very cheery crowd. ON Sat. I had a goodbye lunch with Tebbut who is going back to the line; he is such a nice kid I miss him tremendously.

Then I played tennis in the afternoon with the English Convoy; as it was my first game I did not do very much to uphold the honour of the Belgian F.A.N.Y.s.

On Sunday Hodgson arrived on his way home, so we had another goodbye lunch. It is awfully said, everyone I know has left this town, and you miss them all so much. How is Cam? I must write to him. Would you please write to this address:  
The Belgian Officer des Conges, General Buildings, Aldwych, London.  
Please ask for a "Litre (?) de Conge" for me, giving my full name and address. FANY 5, L'Hopital de Passage, Calais, for leave within three months.

No more news for the present.

Heaps of love from

Trilby.

Will you ask Willie Henry what has happened to my sheep. It ought to have had two lambs by now. Please thank Father for the cheque and also for his letter.

From Aunt Trilby, WW1

FANY 5, APOH, BEF

Mother dearest,

I have been having such a gorgeous time I must write and tell you all about it.

On Monday Major Perkins and another Brigade Major from HQ came down and took us out for lunch, and we did a lot of shopping for a dance which they were giving. He really is a dear Major Perkins, fearfully good looking and attractive but of course married. All the nicest people are out here.

On Tuesday we had a great bathing party. A real pukka major general (General Blacklock), Colonel Goslet and Major Perks (*Perkins?*) went down in a glorious car to the shore, and had great fun. I must say I like those staff people enormously. They are so awfully easy to get on with, and altogether charming. Then yesterday Major Perkins came down in a tremendous state of excitement as they were short of girls, so what a time I had. I tried every girl I knew without success, but at last raked up some Canadian nurses. Then off we went, and I have never enjoyed myself so much in all my life. Simply topping men, nearly all brass hats with four generals. A wonderful old chateau with a beautiful garden with a lake and everything. A top hole dinner with a band, and then such a dance, I cannot describe it. All men who I really liked and just everything you could wish for.

Major Perkins is leaving the Division now so I don't expect we will see much of him in future which is rather sad, he is such a dear boy. We got to bed at 3 o'clock and by 5.15 we were on the road again, then we bathed this morning and lunched on the plage and we were both so dreadfully sleepy even Marples' flow of conversation was stemmed for the time being, and now she is sleeping as if she would never wake up again. A pathetic babe has just come to ask me out for dinner as he is so lonely, so I must stop. How is dear old Kathleen, give her my very best love and tell her I will write quite soon, Love from Trilby.

FANY 5,  
APO 4,  
BEF

Oct 1<sup>st</sup> 1918

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Mother dear,

I do think you are the limit never to have written to me since I left home, however I expect you have been busy. I had a note from Kate in which she says that you have gone to Coventry. I was so glad to hear you had really gone, and I am sure it will do you worlds of good.

Well, since I came back here we have had such an enormous amount of work to do. I can't think how we have done it all. In a fortnight I have only had four hours off duty, and for the last three nights we haven't seen bed, any of us. Driven all day and all night without ceasing, so you may guess we are all pretty tired.

Everyone has been magnificent though, and not a grumble in the Convoy and, surprisingly, little bad-temperedness. The Belgians have done wonderfully and I don't think the end of the war is so fearfully far away.

I hear Tom has come over. I do hope I see him.

Well, there is no news so will stop, as I want to get half an hour's sleep before my next job.

Give my love to all at Arden House, and write to me again soon,

From Trilby

FANY 5,  
L'Hopital de Passage,  
Bruges

November 1<sup>st</sup> 1918

My dearest Mother,

No letters have come through to me yet, but I suppose they will take some time to come to this address.

Well, I have had a wonderful week joy-riding, which began on Tuesday with a run to Ostend. It was interesting to see the damage our planes had done to the town, which was rather knocked about on the outskirts of the town, but the principal buildings were all right. We saw the old Vindictive sunk in the harbour, and everything there was to be seen, but it was comparatively dull and quiet and very few people about. The bridges have all been blown up and replaced by very indifferent ones, which makes driving at night rather difficult.

That night I drove from 12 until 4.30 and at 7.30 started off to take a man (our cook) to his home which he had not seen for 4½ years. I knocked up Fitz-Gerald at the last moment and gave her 10 minutes to come along with me, so she just jumped into gumboots and some rather untidy garments and came along breakfastless. We understood that his house was at Courtrai, about 40 miles away. I knew that Major Lacey was in that direction so called at the signal office to telephone to him. I found that he had left Courtrai, and when they asked me where I was going, we found out that he was at the same place that we were going to, about 20 miles. The signal people were topping, and were great friends of Major Lacey's. Curiously enough they had one of his officers with them, a Mr Bell, who wanted to go to M---, so we said we would take him along with us.

Even then we did not understand that we were starting over the battlefields of the Schelt, where no women had ever been before.

The roads were quite good to begin with, but before long began to get difficult with rounded tops and a 12 inch drop on each side, then mud (*drawing*), which made passing very difficult. As luck would have it we came to a convoy of stationary lorries right in the middle of the road which meant that I had to go with one wheel on the road and the other in the mud at this angle (*drawing of car at 45 degrees*). I was terrified in case the old bus would not stand it; every time I tried to go on the road I had to have it built up for me with stones, then we came to a region where there were no roads at all, having all been blown up by the Bosch on his retreat two day before. There were huge enormous craters about the size of our garden, and bridges everywhere were blown up - we had to take to ploughed fields, being pushed by half the British Army. Of course my wheels wouldn't grip at all, so we put down petrol tins and ran over them, straw mats for shells, and got some branches, and eventually got away. We were the first women to go on that front, and all the way the troops cheered us, and we saluted and smiled and felt like Queens, it was a wonderful reception.

When we got to the man's house we found it razed to the ground, not a stone standing. It was terribly pathetic: he wept, and I wept in sympathy, then we found his people in various cottages and they had a great meeting. It was then 1.30, and as the roads were impossible after dark it remained either to go at once or to stay the night. As it seemed rather a shame to tear Henry away from his people we decided to stay the night, so on we went to Mr Bell's headquarters (where we expected to find Major Lacey) without further accident except that going along a perfectly good road it suddenly collapsed and we were embedded up to the radiator in a shell hole. However with about 10 men we got out and on all right, called at a very nice American HQ, the general of which was very anxious for us to stay for the night, but we weren't even allowed to stay for lunch as Mr Bell was two days late on account of the roads.

Then we got to his place and he casually said "come in for lunch" and we were ushered into an enormous room with about 20 men and generals and things, who all gazed at us in speechless amazement. I also was rather speechless and surprised - . Then the General in a very stern voice asked where we had come from, what we were doing, and what we were going to do, all of which was rather embarrassing, and we discovered that Major Lacey had moved and was miles away. It was rather awkward, so we went out to do up the bus and consider what was to be done. Then Mr Bell came out and said that a room was at our disposal at the Brigade Headquarters, and would we go for tea with the General. Then we went to the church and a boy played the organ. It gave me rather a funny sensation to hear all Polly Kerr's voluntaries played in this old church up at the front, with shell holes through the roof. First some Tommies then some staff strolled in, and it was really rather wonderful.

At tea the General thawed enormously and it was really rather interesting to see him sitting there with a huge map in front of him, and about four officers behind, also with maps, giving instructions about transport, which battalion was to march to where, etc., all lighted up by candles in bottles. After tea Major Lacey arrived and it was topping to see him, much nicer looking than anyone else. He was like a rather worried parent with two bad children; very responsible, which amused me fearfully. He had to get back, and I wasn't keen on driving my bus over to his mess, neither was I keen on dining with the mess, so Major Lacey said "I think the best plan is for you to go to bed, and have dinner sent up to you, the General is such a stern, dry old devil". So like good children we went to bed upstairs, then an orderly came up with a message from the General, "would we be so kind as to dine with him" so down we went, Fitz-Gerald still in gumboots and a borrowed collar of Mr Bell's, and, my dear, we "got off" with the general completely. I was rather bucked, as he really was rather difficult to manage. He was a topping man - two bars to his DSO and a military medal - and invited himself to come and see us, which pleased us, and was just a dear.

After breakfast next morning we started off - the Division was also starting off on a month's march - then we picked up Henry at his village and proceeded, when we were pulled up by a military policeman who said that we were "going against the arrows" which meant that we were not allowed to go against the traffic. The roads had been made since the day before, wonderfully well, of wood and shell cases on end and basket work, but we were not allowed to use them as the troops were coming up. You see, first there was the Bosch, then the advance party, then road makers, then us,

then the troops, so the first day we had no roads, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> day the army was all moving up and we were facing them and could not go on. We crossed pontoon bridges and whatnot, and at each road were met by irritable MPs and worried staff captains, who said that the road was impassable, commandeered for troops only. What should have been a 2 hour run took us five hours as there was a continual stream of traffic for fifteen miles, and I never ceased to blow my horn all the time. At Courtrai we had lunch at Div Headquarters, and returned here for tea. I had sent them a wireless message from the front, which was picked up at Dunkirk, so they were not anxious. But it was dull to be back here, we could have gone on for ever, visiting Headquarters all down the line.

Today a flying corps colonel turned up in a topping car and took us over to Zeebrugge which was awfully interesting. It was extraordinary to stand on the Mole and see it all. I got some tophole souvenirs from the Bosch dugouts, which included a chair, bookcase and despatch box, and saw all our brave old ships there in the harbour with our ensign flying.

That's all for present. I hope you haven't been bored by my long account of experiences, but it was wonderful rather, to be the first women just two days after the Bosch, also the first women to stay at Brigade Headquarters at the front.

Did I tell you that Marples has got a convoy of her own now, here in Bruges for the present. Mrs Mac wouldn't let me join it, as she doesn't want Moses, Marples and myself to be altogether in a convoy for the present - thinks Marps would favour us too much or something.

Moses has gone to Paris to celebrate peace. Peace came very quietly here, all the people had so many celebrations when the Bosch retreated they were tired out. I do wish I had been up in town for it.

Do you mind keeping this letter for me, as I have written down everything I can remember about my visit to the front, and would like to have it afterwards. We will move from here next week I think, probably to Brussles. Cheeri oh.

Heaps of love from Trilby

FANY 5  
APO 4  
BEF

Nov 3<sup>rd</sup>

I am just going to write to you both together Mother and Kate as I haven't any time to write to you separately. Thanks most awfully for the cakes which were lovely and very much appreciated. I sent to Rodgerson & Black for some potted meats, but they haven't turned up. Would you ask if they were sent, also some honey, as we can't get it here, still less up at the front.

Well I have had an enormously strenuous five days. Mrs Mac and Marples had to go to B---e with other two cars, and left me in charge here, with thousands of wounded coming and very short of cars. Fortunately I got five men with ambulances to come to the rescue or I don't know what we would have done. It was awfully difficult for me as I had to do all Mrs Mac's and Marples' work and run my car all the time, as we were so terribly short of drivers and cars, also look after the people who were inclined to be seedy, which means filling hot water bottles, making beds, also interviewing irritated colonels in my best French.

Cheers, the order has just come through for me to go to B---e to take the Colonel up. I am taking all my belongings as I hope to stay. We are going rather an interesting route. Terribly busy packing.

Trilby

Hotel Biarritz  
San Sebastian  
Spain

Nov 15

My dearest Mother,

I have tried to write to you several times, but never got any further than the first page. Well, really I have such a lot to tell you, and have had such a perfectly wonderful time in Spain, I don't really know how to begin to tell you about it, however I will give you an outline.

We left Biarritz very sadly as I simply loved it, and came across quite a few people I knew. We had a very slow journey from there to here, through some top hole scenery, but at once got into cold wet weather that rather spoiled things. This is a much bigger place than Biarritz, and we haven't a word of Spanish between us. It is a wonderfully beautiful bay, with mountains all round, and a picturesque old town.

On Armistice Day we had a somewhat hectic time. We went to the theatre which began at 6, then dinner (the Spanish meals are most peculiar - lunch at 2.30 and ten courses at that, and dinner about 10, and for the last three nights we haven't got up from dinner until 12.30). Then we went on to a dance - I am so disappointed in the Spanish men, they are small and Jewish looking, but when they are good looking they are simply irresistible, and they wear the most wonderful uniforms. The women are nearly all beautiful, lovely eyes, hair and complexions, and their faces are full of life.

To go on about the dance - we met a dear old Marquise who took a violent fancy to us, and introduced us to a few rather nice English speaking people, and we went on to see some Spanish dancing, and finished up at the casino.

Next morning we went off with the Marquise to Ligrinio (?), a place right up in the mountains, half way to Madrid. We had an awfully jolly journey with the late ambassador in London, his daughter, and two other old ministers who talked French. We arrived at the hotel in the middle of the dansant, so immediately began to dance, but the language was a great difficulty. We were about the first English who had ever been there, and they made a tremendous fuss about us, presenting us with sweets and cigarettes all the time. It was the quaintest old town you can imagine, and we were feted by the population all the time - such meals!! I am sure we are all inches more round the waistline.

At one lunch I sat next to the Chilean minister, who knew Jim and Rosa in Antafugastu, small world isn't it! We went to the theatre and danced every day, and really I was sorry to come away. The Marquise was fearfully proud of my ribbons, and when a sufficient crowd had gathered in the streets he would undo my overcoat and expose my beribboned chest and harangue the crowd on what I did in the great war - swish.

When we leave here we go back to Biarritz, then I think to Pau, right up in the



Pyrenees, then the rest are probably going back to Rome and Italy, and north Africa, and I go back to Brussles, then on to Germany. With my usual rotten luck my two particular friends in Cologne have gone to Danzig, which of course makes just all the difference to me; I can't say I am looking forward to the club work very much, after the very interesting two months I have had it will be very dull settling down in Cologne. I suppose I will get used to it though.

I do think it would be perfectly ridiculous of Peg to live in England for this winter. You can stay in any quite decent Hotel here for 10/- a day, in France I mean - Spain is very expensive - and have a top hole time, with no domestic worries, and it would only cost her about £20 extra for her fare for both of them, as living is so much cheaper. What would you think of coming out to Mentone (?) yourself in March? I am sure you would enjoy it most awfully. Do excuse this very rambling letter, but it is so difficult to tell you even half the things I want to.

Love from Trilby

FANY 5,  
L'Hopital de Passage,  
Bruge

November 27<sup>th</sup>

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My dearest Mother,

Thanks so much for your letter. As you see we are still here and every day there are different rumours as to where we are going to move to.

Of course there are far too many of us here, crowds of men, women, and half the cars crocked, so the place is completely spoiled.

Since I last wrote to you we have been very busy feeding prisoners. Last night we fed 1,400. We went down to the station at 11.30 expecting the train - it was five hours late, so we spent the night on the platform, consequently we have all got olds today. I never saw such a strange crowd as the prisoners. They seemed absolutely dazed, not a cheer among them, and scarcely a smile. They were quite different from any crowd I have ever seen, poor devils they had had a fearful time, and it's topping helping them. The Belgians have been most awfully good to them, and they have all had a great time in Brussles, so were not particularly hungry.

Everything is most fearfully dear in Brussles. Two of our girls who were up there for the night paid 40F for their bedroom, and 39 francs for their breakfast. I don't think I want to go to Brussles just yet, and if I do I am taking my own food. I think a Rover car would be as good as any, and it will be topping having it. Have you done anything in the way of having the plantation in front of the house cleared? It would be a vast improvement and not very difficult to do.

Must go now, Heaps of love, from Trilby

FANY 13,  
Corps de Transport CTP  
Armee Belge  
Bruge

Dec 6<sup>th</sup> 1918

My dearest Mother,

Thank you so much for your letter which I was delighted to get. We are cut off from all letters here, and only a very few come through, which are very much appreciated. Now let me see what I have been doing this week.

On Sat. while at tea O'Neill suddenly said "Oh McDowall, you might go down to Calais after tea with two nurses and bring back tyres and tubes" of which we were short.

It was dark when I started and the car wasn't going very well, however on we went until we got to the middle of no-man's land, and there the beastly car stopped. You can't imagine anything more depressing than to be stuck there, with nothing but swamps and ruins for miles, and rats scuttering about all over the place, and this horrible desolation everywhere. Fortunately another car came along and took on the nurses, and after half an hour's fiddling with different things, with a man's help we made the brute go. Shortly afterwards I picked up some Americans who were absolutely lost. They were just sitting on the side of the road with their car, not knowing what road to take, so I piloted them into Dunkirk.

It was a miserable journey (120 kilometres), terribly dark, and the bus going badly. At 11.30 she stopped again, 10 miles from Calais, and nothing would make her go. I sent on a man with a passing car to send back a lorry for me to tow me on, expecting it to arrive in an hour or so. However it didn't turn up until 8.30 next morning, so I just slept the night in the car. I had two blankets so wasn't too uncomfortable but the rain was coming down whole water and it was pretty miserable.

I had a very strange adventure: I heard a lorry coming so got out, it passed, skidded, and dashed into a tree, turning a complete circle. The men were rather badly cut about the head. I had fortunately got dressings and bandages with me, so tendered first aid in the approved fashion, much to the astonishment of the men would couldn't think where I had sprung from.

It was 10.30 before I got to Calais for breakfast, after which I felt slightly better, then went over to our old mess which was the saddest thing I have seen for some time, not any furniture left. A horrid old YMCA man arrived to buy it, so I showed him round, just on the verge of tears, as I was feeling very rotten, and hated selling the old place where we have had such wonderfully happy times.

Then I went to the Continental where I had a great reception. George, the head waiter, and Madam both rushed up and shook hands with me, and I had a top hole lunch, fussed over all the time. Then I saw about my bus, tyres and tubes and things,

had tea with the English Envoy, dined with the English Consul, and spent the night with a French lady who has been awfully kind to us. The next morning I started off in a car, as my own bus is in dock for two weeks, and had every sort of trouble, took 4 hours to do 20 miles, so I abandoned it and started on foot and by means of "lorry-hopping" in seven different cars managed to get here in time for a dance.

On Tuesday we went down to Lille for a show the 14<sup>th</sup> Div. people gave. They sent cars for us so we arrived in time for tea, then saw rather an impressive torchlight procession, had a very good dinner, then danced. Quite nice men and very good dancers, so I enjoyed myself thoroughly. We spent the night there, and the next day General Skinner took another girl and myself up to Ypres and Menin (?). It was intensely interesting as the General had been in command of that area for some time, and what a country it is. I can't think how the poor devils didn't go mad. Tanks and aeroplanes all over the place, and nothing but brown mud, and woods with only tiny stumps and roots left. It is ghastly. There are lots of Bosch prisoners on the road here, tidying up the unexploded shells and things into dumps, so even here the grass is beginning to grow on the shell holes, and it is being patched up.

Today FitzGerald and myself are going to lunch with General Price, and Americans at their mess near Courtrai (?). He is rather a nice old thing so it should be rather amusing. I have left FANY 5 now, with many regrets, as I was so fond of all the girls there, but Moses Marples and myself are together again which is topping. Of course the real happy irresponsible days have gone; now that Marples is CO she is always busy and worried about things, and I am just here temporarily as I expect to go to Brussles any day with four others, and be attached to a hospital there. I would be perfectly happy about it if only Moses was coming too, but I don't know any of the other five very well. However I expect I will enjoy myself all right.

Tons of love and do write to me soon, Your Trilby

FANY 13  
CTP  
18 Quai St Anne  
Bruge

Kathleen dearest,

What a little beast you are never to write to me. I am getting so bored writing to you and never getting a reply.

Well, we had a frightfully cheery Xmas here, in spite of the entire absence of letters and parcels. Perhaps they will come through in time though.

We began Xmas with a very cheery dinner and dance at the Flying Corps Headquarters at a topping chateau. It was rather funny. I sat between the two majors, and when I said I lived in Kirkcudbright Major Gow said "Oh, I have a shoot at Douglas Hall", and Major Welsh said "Oh, my people lived at a place called Enrick". He is evidently a nephew of old Hugh (?) Welsh's, and he is a perfect dear. Unfortunately he is leaving this place, but I have only met him once.

On Xmas Day we lunched at FANY 5, arrived at 12.30 and found that they had forgotten to put in the turkey so lunch was delayed somewhat. Then we had a fancy dress dinner here at night, quite small, only two RAF people and a French Squadron, but we had quite an amusing evening. The next day I spent most of the day on No Man's Land but at night we went down to Poperinyhe (?) for a gorgeous dance which some Americans gave. They were a topping crowd, all staff, I met them that time I went down to Courtrai and have seen a good deal of them since. Unfortunately it has always been the General and all the old colonels and majors that have come up, very nice but not too thrilling, but when we got down there, there were some topping Captains and Lieuts. The poor devils are never allowed to come up here, as the senior members of the staff always come up first chance.

Of course I quite lost my heart to the two ADCs who were the two sweetest things. The first really nice men I have met since the days of Perkins and Lacey, they are (all the young ones) coming up today for tea and a dance. By jove they were nice Kate, all regulars, and the most wonderful dancers. Quite different from any other Americans I have ever met. They had the most gorgeous chateau and band and did us very well.

The next day we came up by Ypres, St Julien, Paschendaele, etc., a terrible stretch of country - I rather hate going over those battlefields, one feels such an intruder in that ghastly graveyard. Like the other day with General Skinner, we had lunch at Gulimand (?) where poor Bertram was killed, with Hooys (?) on the right where Bry (?) went west. Of course there isn't a sign of any of those places, not even a lump of stones, but sign posts with "?? St. Jean" etc. Oh Kathleen how those men stood it I cannot understand. I don't think I would have minded much if I had been killed there.

Still no word of an actual move here, but it is always in the air, which is rather unsettling. I simply hate Bruge, it's too depressing for words and always ruins, and nothing..... *(rest of letter missing)*

*Trilby to Kathleen re Xmas Bruge*

FANY 13,  
CTP,  
Armee Belge  
Bruge

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Kathleen dearest,

What a little devil you are never to write to me. You simply cannot understand what it is like not to get any letters from home.

I had a topping time in Brussles, but of course it was much too short. You know we cut a very chic tea, dinner and dance at which we were to meet the Prince of Wales, to come back, as we thought there would be a frightful row if we didn't, and we got no thanks for coming back at all.

I want to try and get other two days in Brussles before Moses goes, as she is such a priceless person to go about with, awfully cheery and never jars, and knows everyone. She is leaving to work for the Americans in Paris, and I shall miss her terribly. If the Brussles job doesn't come through before very long, I will join her in Paris, but would infinitely rather go to Brussles. There are crowds of people up there that I know, and it is a topping place.

How is the wee son? I expect he will be huge when I next see him. Do you still worry as to how many ounces of food you should give him? I do hope you will be awfully happy at old Barcheskie house. I am sure you will be able to make it most awfully pretty, and the garden too can be made awfully nice. I do hope you won't find Fanny a nuisance but I don't think you will.

You must excuse me not sending you anything for Xmas old thing, but I am hard up rather. Brussles though very nice is damned expensive. But here's the very best of everything to you, luck and happiness and all the rest.

With tons of love, from Trilby

*(Could this be to Kate - ref to Barcheskie?)*

FANY 13,  
Bruges

My darling child, (*probably to sister Kate?*)

No letter from you for ages. We had a top hole time this last time in Brussles. A very good run up, then we dined at a Canadian mess, and afterwards had a topping dance. Nexct day we had lunch at The place, then went to the opera, which was sumply glorious. Saw a review next day of our troops, who all looked splendid, and had a very good run home. We expect to go back to Brussles for good and all in about two days. I hope so, as I love the place. Wonderful forests all round, and a topping town.

Do let me have Tom's address by return, he wrote and never gave it to me and I may be down in that part of the world at any moment.

I think I will go to Paris next month for a few days leave. What was Tom's news when he was at home, and why hasn't he been up to see me?

How topping for you having Cam home, I am sure you will be fearfully happy.

Write to me c/o Hotel Astoria, Brussles as I don't know what our proper address will be. Did you see Drew? And do you know where he is? Write by return and let me know will you.

Tons of love to you both, from Trilby

Calais

Darling Mother,

Here I am back in old Calais again. Mrs Mac, Marples and myself came down here the day before yesterday, and had quite a decent run down, then yesterday we were decorated properly with the Croix de Guerre in the morning, kissed by old general on both cheeks in the approved fashion. I do wish you could have seen us. The Marps and I had tea with the Bishop of Colchester and another padre, then had a very chic little dinner at the Continental. Just the French and English Generals with A.D.C.s and some other French people who had been most awfully kind to us in Calais.

Marps has gone on leave now, and Mac and myself are going to Antwerp tomorrow via Lille, rather a long way round but the floods are awfully bad in the north; it was most exciting coming through them, I was terrified we would be washed off the road. I sincerely hope we will reach Antwerp, but the car is just falling to pieces. We got it 300 yards this morning and nothing would induce it to go further. I don't mind how much trouble I have by myself with the car, but I hate anything to go wrong when Mrs Mac is with me.

I do wish I had Tom's address in Lille and I could look him up tomorrow. I can't think why he hasn't been up to see me.

Write soon. Love from Trilby



34 Rue de la Limit (?)  
Brussels

My dearest Mother,

Here I am "stuck" with no hope of leave for at least another month. I came up to get some more clothes, passport, etc., to go home with, and found half of the convoy in bed and the rest very busy, so I simply couldn't leave them in the lurch.

What a rotten life it is too, after the one I have been leading in the south - up at 6 every morning, and constant work all day, and we are really too tired to do much at nights. I have got on dances for the next four nights, but don't know if I will manage to go.

We had a topping time in Paris on our way back from Menton (?) but of course it was much too short, as Clayton wanted to get back for the National. I cursed it, as we could have stayed another week or so. It's snowing for all it is worth here, and miserable weather altogether.

Let me know what news you have of Tom. I haven't heard a word from him, I must get home to see him though. Has Kate got her own house yet? And how is she managing about servants? I think the best thing would be to try and get either Swiss or Belgians. We have Bosch servants here and they are quite good.

I have to go to .... so must go.

Tons of love and do write to me soon. Love from Trilby

FANY 13, CTB  
Garage du Minister de la Guerre  
Rue de Charite,  
Brussles

Feb 6<sup>th</sup> 1917(1919?)

My darling Mother,

Here we are really installed in Brussles at last. It's topping being here, but the work is most awfully dull. We get up at 6 and have a 20 minute walk before we get to the garage, then we take the officers to the War Office, which takes us from 7.30 to 10. Then again from 12 until 2.30 we are busy then from 6.30 until 8.30, and there there are odd jobs inbetween, so we are never allowed to leave the garage, so it is all rather boring, and terribly expensive as

*(from here letter torn, so guess/absent)*

we have not yet got a mess, so we are staying in an hotel and having all our meals at restaurants, so you may imagine what our bills are like. Will you ask Father to send by return of post... to the above address, my allowance for February 1<sup>st</sup> which I am in rather dire need of. Personally I haven't had .... time as I share my car, ... as I know rather a lot of people I have been out a good deal. The food .... But the price! and the cakes are to dream about, but impossible to get hold of under 6d each, and that is at the small shops. Brussles is a topping place, with beautiful buildings and pictures and I do hope we get an ambulance column soon, that would be simply wonderful, but i we don't get it I will be home ere long. I am very keen to go ack to Germany and Paris before that though, also I would like to do Italy in the spring, but I don't know whether we will be able to manage that. At the present moment the only place I can get to is the bankruptcy court.

Must go now, do write to me soon and tell me all the news. I haven't heard from you for ages.

Love to you all, from Trilby

I have sent to Affleck and Browns for ... things, as I am absolutely and completely in rags, and as I know .... people I simply must be decent. It's awfully funny, I go out for .... with countesses and baronesses, and .... by the fire with umpteen chauffeurs .... etc. Truly we are all very.....

Mess du 1<sup>st</sup> Guides A.O.  
Gladbach  
Germany

My darling Mother,

I don't know what you will think of me for not writing to you before, but life for the last week has been too hectic for words. Mrs Mac and I left Calais last Friday, in the duddest car that ever was, to go to Antwerp via St. Omer, Baulle, Armentiers, Lille et Gent. It was all enormously interesting but the car was very worrying, which spoiled things. We had 24 stoppages, which included the car going on fire, and a spring broke outside Gent, so we arrived there at 2 in the morning, and of course couldn't get anything to eat, and we were simply famished.

The next day we left the car to be repaired, lunched, tea-d and dined with different families, and got a lift home at night with a flying corps car, arriving at 11 o'clock in the middle of a topping dance at the convent. I enjoyed it enormously, but was furious at having missed half of it.

Mrs Mac is a great heroine in Gent, as it was there that she was taken prisoner by the Bosch and managed to escape.

The next day we went sight-seeing in the morning, and in the afternoon three French aviators turned up to take another girl and myself to dinner at Dunkirk. Well, the floods had risen tremendously and in the middle the car refused to go any further. So those very chic officers, all in their best red breeches with blue lines, lovely boots, etc., had to get out and push. I was sorry for them, but they were simply splendid and never said a word. We had dinner at their mess and came home via Poperinghe (?), Ypres and Meries (?) - an extraordinary road in the moonlight, but I was nearly dead with sleep.

Next day I spent most of the day in bed, but got up for a dance which a squadron gave. Quite a decent dance and I had rather an amusing time with a very interesting but peculiar youth who writes all the flying corps articles and poetry for the Daily Mail. Next day we started off for Brussels (Mrs Mac and myself) in one car, and the oil pump was broken, took out another and the magneto was dead. I was almost in despair, but Mrs Mac asked Wood if she would take us in her car, so off we started at 8.30 at night and arrived at Brussels about 12.30. Had to try about 7 hotels before we could get into one.

The next morning we started off, passed Louvain where we got the most priceless cakes, and stayed the night with some topping Dragoon Guards near Liege, where we danced and had a tophole time. Next day we came on here by Aix le Chapelle where we were supposed to meet the Minister of War to arrange about convoys up here, however he had departed, and I wasn't sorry as I don't think I am terribly keen on being in Germany permanently.

We are now staying with the crack Belgian cavalry regiment, and they really are dears.

It is an awfully pleasant life here. Every morning we ride, then lunch at some other mess, then play bridge and indoor 'boules', and altogether our time is quite filled up. The country is simply gorgeous - just like Scotland, all heather and pine woods, and it is wonderful riding through the forest for miles and miles. Everything is spotlessly clean and very modern - electric light and central heating in all the houses, and this is only a very small village.

Tomorrow we are going to Colvique (?) (can't spell it) and the next day back to Brussles. I do hope I see some of my English friends in Colvique, but we are taking a lot of Belgian officers with us, and I can see it is going to be difficult. As we go along the streets here all the men take off their hats, but you can feel how they hate us. You cannot accuse the Germans of cowardice: on two occasions yesterday we met a woman coming along the road, we were trotting hard six horses abreast, and she never moved off the road but walked right through us. I must say I admired her pluck.

I must go and change now as we are going out riding. Heaps of love and do write to me soon and tell me all the news, also Tom's address. I haven't heard from him for ages, and was through Lille again the other night.

From Trilby

Hotel Kronprinz,  
Cologne

Oct 18<sup>th</sup> <sup>1919?</sup> (~~year~~ *unknown, but maybe during WW2?*)

My darling Mother,

Here I am in Cologne and really enjoying myself very much indeed. I came up on Wed - motored to Liege, a topping run through very pretty country, and through some very badly smashed towns, --- etc, but it is simply wonderful the way the Belgians are sttling down and building up again. I came by train from Liege, a shocking journey which took seven hours instead of three, then I had a very good dinner with a little ADC man I met on the train. There was a top hole band - all Germans - however they plaed all Scotch songs and reels with great gusto, and sang "Annie Laurie" and "Ye Banks & Braes" with quite a good Scotch accent, and great feeling.

Yesterday I went round to Brown first thing - she is a Fany who is working in the YMCA here - then went to see a staff colonel I know, Colonel Gosset. He is head of the Educational scheme for the Rhine Army and rather a knut. He motored me out to one of the Outposts of the army of Occupation, through some lovely country, then I lunched with him. The Bosch certainly don't seem to lack for anything in the eating line - then I had tea with Brown and another man, then Colonel Gosset motored me out to Major & Mrs Perkins for dinner. Major Perkins was one of my greatest friends in the Great War, so it was rather funny to meet him with his wife, who is a beautiful girl, and they make the handsomest couple I have ever seen.

Today I'm lunching with Colonel Gosset and then motoring in the afternoon, then dining with some people tonight and going on to a dance the VI Corps are giving. As you see it is really quite an amusing sort of place to be in.

Tomorrow I expect a car from Brussles to take me down the Rhine to Bonn, Coblenze and Uisbaden, a two day trip, then I think I will come back here until the 25<sup>th</sup> then go for another week to Brussles, then six of us go down to Biarritz for two or three weeks, then I would like to get a job here until January as I won't have a penny left in the world.

What a time you must have had getting Jimmy off. Ever so much love and do write to me soon, from Trilby

From British Empire Leave Club, Cologne - British Army on the Rhine.

Sometime during WW1 (or after?) 1918

My dearest Mother,

Just a line to tell you that I am still going on, but just recovering from a very strenuous Xmas week. Do you know I have danced almost every night for three weeks. This week we have had some topping dances.

On Sunday I got a day off and we started off for Aix-le-Chapelle, but the old car was going so badly we only got about half way, then I went to an awfully good dance and dinner that Colonel Pudsey gave. I knew him in Brussles. On Monday, after a very good dinner with Major Stopford and his cousin Lady Eileen, who is here with us, we went on to the Chiefs General Robertson's dance. We all expected it to be rather stiff, as his dances generally are, but this one went off with a crash, and I enjoyed every moment of it. He is a funny old thing, an absolutely rough diamond, and no-one knows what any of the family is going to do next.

On Tuesday the Inniskillen Dragoons gave a very good dance in their mess. Then on Wed I went for a long motor run as I was feeling pretty tired, and Cologne is such an airless place. Then I had a Summer dance from 6 until 9, then I rushed home and changed and got back again for a Fancy dress Ball at 9.30. I couldn't be bothered getting into fancy dress, so went in my black evening dress, and it looked quite all right, that dress has been a godsend.

We brought in the New Year very effectively, but really I was so tired I could scarcely move. On Thursday I had a whole day off, so stayed in bed most of it, but went to a little dinner dance at night, the little dances are much the best.

Tonight I am dining and dancing at the IV Corps, Sat a private dance, Sunday the Opera, Monday the Pantomime, and the rest of the week dances: some life, isn't it. But it just suits me, and I manage to keep fairly fresh, and of course I meet a lot of awfully interesting people. I heard twice from old Charteris this week, he is going out East again, he quite enjoyed the Farmers Ball and met Andy & Jean Montgomerie. Peg doesn't seem to be having much of a time at Brighton. I can't think why she doesn't go to the south of France - nothing would persuade me to stay in England in winter if I could get out of it.

Well, I must go now. With heaps of love to everyone and write to me again soon, and could you remind Father that my allowance is due. Tons of love, from Trilby.

BELC  
c/o GHQ  
BAR

My darling Mother,

Thank you so much for your letter. I suppose by now that you will be in Edinburgh with Peg. I do hope you have an awfully good time, and thoroughly enjoy yourself. It is most awfully good of you to say that you will send me £5, and I should simply love it. The clothes actually are not much good, but the underclothes, materials and things are ever so much cheaper while the exchange is like this. I think the club will shut down about the end of this month, and it will be very sad leaving Cologne as I have really enjoyed myself here.

Had quite a quiet time since last I wrote. Went to see "Madame Butterfly" at the opera on Sat. It was simply wonderful, they do know how to get the best effects in this country, then went on to a very jolly dance, arrived disgracefully late, of course, but it didn't matter. On Sunday I had the day off, but we put in a very quiet day. I stayed in bed until lunch time then went for a walk and had tea with Lady Kitty Vincent. Yesterday I went to see a football match with the Inniskillings. It was simply gorgeous out in the country, and I thoroughly enjoyed it, though the people I went with were badly beaten, then after dinner we went for a motor run which was topping. We are having the most gorgeous weather here, just like April, it does make you feel so fit.

About South America, I do think it would be a pity if I didn't go this September with Nen. You know you said last year that we would put it off for a year and I was quite contented about it, but I should be most terribly disappointed if I didn't go this year, as I have always understood that it was all quite settled as you promised.

Another thing, darling, I do think you are making a huge mistake not to have a man that can drive the car. In fact I really can't understand your idea, as I can't always be at Girdstingwood and, after all, you have only yourselves and your comfort to consider, and you might just as well do yourselves well. I will always be able to manage, but I do want to go to South America this year.

What about the tennis court - would you ask Peg to see about netting for the sides, as we ought to be getting a move on with it. Also, what about Jack - is anything being done about him? It seems such a mistake for him to loaf about home and do nothing. Must go now, with heaps of love, and do write to me soon. What news have you of Tom, and also of Jeanette McKay - has she married her doctor man? Love, and write soon, and do see about a man who can drive a car. Yours ever, Trilby

BELC  
c/o GHQ  
Cologne

My darling Mother,

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Just a line to tell you that I am all right. On Sat. Fisher and I started off with Colonel & Mrs Levey for Ostend. The car went quite well until within 50 kilometres of Brussles when we developed engine trouble which hung us up for several hours so we didn't get into Brussles until 10.30.

Next morning (Sunday) we started off again and all went well until we got to a village 30 kilometres the other side of Brussles, when the wheel, hub and all came off. We made straight for a house but (*un*)fortunately got on a broad soft pavement and the axle got buried in the soft earth and we just pivoted round missing the house by inches, and a child by a hair's breadth. I don't think I have ever had a more narrow escape and was very thankful that I wasn't driving.

We spent that night in the village, in very damp nursery beds, and after having a meal of horsey horse flesh I was very seedy and sorry for myself. Next afternoon we went back to Bruxelles and had two days there, but Brussles isn't the place it used to be, and all the Belgians look too, too appalling out of uniform, so I was very pleased to get back to comfortable old Cologne again, and have dances going for the next three nights.

Then I suppose I will have to go back to Brussles again to fetch the car - what a life it all is - .

I am so glad you have got something definite about the car, but, my dear, don't let any man learn on your car - he would indeed be an expensive chauffeur, and really if things are going well in the farming line I don't see why you shouldn't have a decent chauffeur-gardener.

What about South America? I am most frightfully keen to go. In fact I have set my heart on it, as I have really worked pretty hard, and the good time I have had is entirely of my own making.

Must go now darling, with ever so much love and do write to me soon.

From Trilby



36 C.C.S.,  
Cologne

April 12<sup>th</sup>

My dearest Mother,

Just a very short note to tell you how well I am going on. I am eating well (as usual) and they feed you quite well, and I have started to 'peel'. They weren't absolutely sure about it (my having scarlet fever) because I took so long. I expect to be able to get up in another week, but am taking things quietly, as you have to be so awfully careful of the consequences of scarlet fever. The only thing is that I sleep rather badly, but that I hope is a passing ailment. Everyone has been so awfully good to me, and I can tell you I do appreciate letters so please don't stop writing to me, as they just make all the difference to life here.

What have you got in the way of servants now? You have never mentioned them. I do hope you have decent weather for the cleaning, be sure and don't overdo things yourself.

I feel awfully unlike letter writing today, so excuse this feeble note.

With love from Trilby

36 C.C.S.,  
Cologne

April 21<sup>st</sup>

My darling Mother,

Thanks so much for your letter which arrived yesterday. I am allowed to have a bath every day now, but they won't let me up for a few days yet. Mrs Ellesworth and myself have been put into the same room now. We both protested violently, as it's so much nicer to have your own wee room, but you feel just like a helpless child here, and have to do as you are told. Fortunately she is very nice, and we get on all right.

I understood Aunt Lizzie had let Springbank furnished - how is it that you say she has it stored? It is dreadful this difficulty of servants, how are you off now? I am so glad you have gone to Edinburgh with Peg, be sure and get some nice clothes as you will want them with Nen being at home, and it makes such a difference, and have a good time, as you haven't been away for such ages.

Nearly every day someone turns up to see me now, and I shout to them from the window. It makes such a difference. Don't you worry about me here, I have quite tumbled into hospital life and am quite enjoying it. The only thing is that I simply love getting letters. One day there weren't any, and I felt so despondent I didn't know what to do with myself, so please don't stop writing to me.

It really sounds awful Kate being 12st 7, can nothing be done for her? I am awfully afraid I will get fat too, lying here in bed and eating like anything, but I was as thin as a rake when I came in. What about the tennis court and the garden - are they getting on all right? I must go now dearest, with heaps of love and I am so looking forward to being with you again. I would have been delighted if you had all turned up in Cologne. The exchange is not so good as it was, and all the prices are up, still, you could have done a battlefield tour, and I am sure you would quite have enjoyed yourself.

Love from Trilby

36 C.C.S.  
Cologne

Wednesday

My darling Mother,

The doctors don't think I will be able to get out tomorrow as my feet haven't peeled yet. I can't tell you how miserable and fed up I feel about it, the first time I have really felt depressed since the first days that I came here, but I always took it for granted that I would get out at the end of my six weeks. For the last four days I have spent most of my time either having baths or soaking my feet in soda and boiling water, I have also used sandpaper and pumice stone but nothing seems to do any good, and now I am so tired of the sight of them. It really is too sickening, and I do think my luck is the worst that ever was.

It's very wearing, the uncertainty of it all, and I can't tell you how absolutely and completely fed up I am, though I am trying to be resigned, as I was worrying so much I was really beginning to feel quite rottenish, and I had been feeling so frightfully fit. Thank goodness (for) Mrs Griffith as she is very bright and amusing, and cheers me up. I am equally thankful though that she doesn't share my room, as she is never silent for a moment.

I am so glad you enjoyed Liverpool so much, and of course I am longing to hear all about Nen and family; tell her to write to me soon herself, as I am longing to hear all about everything. I have asked Winnie Hays (?) to come to us in the middle of June, is that all right? I have stayed with her for three summers, and we have never had her back. I do wish I knew definitely when I am going to be let out of this prison, but no-one can tell yet, you see until my feet have peeled I am still infectious.

With tons of love, from your very much fed up Trilby

Will you thank Father for the £5 which has just arrived, and tell him I will write tomorrow after I have seen the doctors.

36 C.C.S.,  
Cologne

My dearest Father,

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Ever so many thanks for your letter and also for the £5 which I was delighted to get as I need it rather badly as I have to pay all the way back from here without any reduction of fare, and it is about £5 from here to London - horribly expensive.

The doctors came and looked at my feet yesterday, and they won't hear of me going out for a few days yet. I asked if I could travel right away, and they thought it would be madness. Isn't it rotten luck, and I can't tell you how miserable and fed up I am about it. Mrs Ellesworth came and saw me yesterday, she says she gets tired very easily and has quite lost her appetite and colour. I think she must have done rather too much in spite of her husband being a doctor.

When I come out I am to have some electric treatment for my hair which I am rather worried about. It is very expensive treatment at home but comparatively cheap here so I am lucky to get it. I am supposed to go to the dentist too, but am going to wait until I get home, as I can't afford it out here. With the mark going down every day the way it is, everyone is being awfully poor out here now, as the mark is only 175 to the £, instead of 400. I unfortunately never changed at that, so haven't got any good out of it at all, but everyone thought during the revolution that the mark would go to at least 600, but the Americans, the fools, have put any amount of food into Germany, and given her unlimited credit, so of course we all suffer as the prices have gone up to equal 400 marks to the £.

There is absolutely no news to tell you so must stop. I do wish I could give you an idea of when I am coming home, but at the present moment I haven't an idea when it is likely to be. With much love, and ever so many thanks for the £5.

From Trilby

36 CCS  
Cologne

May 1<sup>st</sup>

My dearest Mother & Father,

Thank you both so much for your letters. You are dears to write me so much and I do appreciate it.

The only news is that we have had a frightful strafe here about visitors. You see I was really enjoying my convalescence very much, as every day one or two cheery souls turned up and passed the time quite pleasantly. Then one day a guileless youth and myself were talking away when the Matron turned up and told him he had no right to be there without a pass, and told me to return to my ward at once.

She is the most terrifying woman I have ever seen, over 6 feet in height and weighs over 20 stone, and when she goes out all the German children run after her singing "Rule Britannia". Personally I have never been so frightened of anyone in my life, and feel like getting under the bed whenever I see her, even in the distance. It's most extraordinary how in hospital one loses one's grown-up-ness, and one feels just like a kid. All the men are exactly the same.

But to go back to my story: after ticking us off she just swept on without giving us time to collect ourselves, and we didn't know whether to be more surprised, frightened or amused, for really it was most frightfully funny. But truth to tell we "retired in confusion" and it took me 10 minutes to think out all the things we might have said.

First, if we had only asked about a pass, she would have been done in, as there has never been such a thing in this hospital, and she only asked him to catch him up. Secondly, The Powers that Be have always known about visitors; in fact they have been rather encouraged, but she has only been out 10 days and is a Reformer, and of course, when you come to think of it, it is rather ridiculous having a crowd of people always hanging about an isolation block. In fact a Mrs Griffiths, who came up to see me on Monday, came in three days later with measles. Thank heaven it wasn't scarlet or I should have felt most frightfully responsible. Of course it means that the rest of the time here will be most frightfully dull and lonely, but I dare say I shall survive.

Matron lay in wait for Captain Ellesworth yesterday, but he is a doctor and had permission from the Colonel so was all right.

I do think it will be a pity if Kate goes away on May 10<sup>th</sup>. Why she should choose that date I can't imagine with Nen arriving on the 12<sup>th</sup> and myself a few days later, and about Peg's last week. I think it will be a most awful pity if she goes away when we can all be a united family, and so very unnecessary with a whole year in which she might go away. I wrote to her yesterday, but I think you and Peg ought to use your influence a bit.

I really think I would be the better of another £5. I simply hate asking for money, but I

want a tooth crowned and have to pay my fare all the way from here to Kirkcudbright, and I haven't the remotest idea how much it will be.

Did I tell you that Aunt Lizzie sent me £1 to buy silk stockings with. I do think it was perfectly sweet of her, but alas, the mark isn't what it was, and prices get higher and higher.

Must stop now, with ever so much love

From Trilby

Was most awfully pleased and surprised to hear of Fanny Williamson's engagement. She is an awfully nice girl, a wonderful county tennis player, but how is he keeping her, and where is he going to put her, and when is the marriage going to be? Will I have to give Fanny a present? Let me know.

36 C.C.S.,  
Cologne

Wed.

My darling Mother,

I was so pleased to hear that you had gone up to Liverpool to meet Nen, it's ever so nice for you, and I can just imagine the state of excitement you would be in. Well, what are the kiddies like, and Nen too? I am just longing to hear all about them so write soon and tell me. I am so sorry not to be home with you all, but I won't be long now.

I am feeling ever so well, and everyone says that I look absurdly healthy. I am much fatter than when I came into hospital but as I have an enormous appetite and only a smallish garden to wander round it isn't surprising.

Mrs Ellesworth has gone off this morning, and I miss her most awfully, she was such a nice thing, and we got on most awfully well in what might have been very difficult circumstances, so I am now the sole remainder of the scarlet fever epidemic. Mrs. Griffiths is having a rotten time with measles, temp. 105 when she came in. I have known her for some time, in fact she came and called on me two days before she came in, and we had fixed up a dinner to welcome my return, for the night I came out. She has a very nice husband, a major in the Gunners, I like him better than her. There is also a sister with diphtheria, and we are all terrified of catching one another's diseases.

It's a nuisance about not being allowed visitors. Mrs Ellesworth and Mrs Griffiths are allowed to see their husbands so I don't see why I should be cut off from everybody. However the time will soon pass. I do hope I get out on Tuesday all right. If so my plans are roughly this: stay here until Sunday the 16<sup>th</sup>, arrive London 17<sup>th</sup>, spend two days in London as I have to report and see some people, and come home on the 20<sup>th</sup>. Of course it's no use really arranging dates as you never know what may happen, but that is what I hope to do. I will have to come by Ostend instead of Calais, as there are no more leave trains running.

With tons of love to you all and I do wish I could be with you.

From Trilby

Dom Hotel  
Cologne

May 21<sup>st</sup>

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My darling Mother,

Here I am out of hospital at last, and very thankful to be so. Really the place was getting on my nerves. I didn't know until 12.30 whether I would be allowed out, and then had such a time getting bathed, hair washed, and clothes disinfected, and got out by 5.30, so excited and red in the face they nearly kept me in hospital in case I developed measles. Mrs Griffiths has got out too, so I had lunch with her today, then we both had electric treatment which I like very much - it gives you thrills all down your spine.

Tomorrow afternoon I am motoring but I don't want to take things too strenuously as I am so afraid of anything happening though I really feel as fit as anything.

I do think it rotten of Kate not to be at home, I would have been hurt if it had been me. I wrote and told her so when I thought I was coming home on the 20<sup>th</sup> but she said it couldn't be helped. I do wish I could be at home, I am all excited over the Overland - who is driving it? Is it new? Tell me all about it.

No time for more, I am sorry not to be able to get home in time for the 26<sup>th</sup>. Do write to me soon,

Love from Trilby



Dom Hotel  
Cologne

My darling Mother,

Here I am still in Cologne. I meant to leave on Sunday but met a man in rather a hole, as he had a car to take to Calais and didn't know what to do with it, so I said I would take it down for him, as the trains are so bad in this part of the world and it is so much pleasanter by car. We expect to start sometime at the end of the week. I thought of going up to Berlin, and bringing the ar down, but can't afford it as Berlin is so expensive just now. Don't worry about me as I am thoroughly well chaperoned by Mrs Ellesworth and Mrs Griffiths, and the ladies of the YMCA, Church Army and Catholic Club. I think I have got enough money to manage here all right, but will probably want some when I get to London.

It's most awfully nice in Cologne just now, I see a lot of Mrs Griffiths who is an awful dear, and I manage to put in the time very pleasantly. Go and watch polo and tennis, and dance a good bit, but have not played any tennis yet as I am so afraid of overdoing things. I do hope I see Nen and Bertie in town. We will spend the first night in Brussles, 2<sup>nd</sup> in Calais, and take the car right up to London, so I hope we have good luck as it is a long run.

Must go now as I have no more news to tell you.

Heaps of love, from Trilby

BELC  
c/o GHQ  
Cologne

My darling Mother,

Just a line to tell you that I am all right. On Sat. Fisher and I started off with Colonel & Mrs Levey for Ostend. The car went quite well until within 50 kilometres of Brussles when we developed engine trouble which hung us up for several hours so we didn't get into Brussles until 10.30.

Next morning (Sunday) we started off again and all went well until we got to a village 30 kilometres the other side of Brussles, when the wheel, hub and all came off. We made straight for a house but (*un*)fortunately got on a broad soft pavement and the axle got buried in the soft earth and we just pivoted round missing the house by inches, and a child by a hair's breadth. I don't think I have ever had a more narrow escape and was very thankful that I wasn't driving.

We spent that night in the village, in very damp nursery beds, and after having a meal of horsey horse flesh I was very seedy and sorry for myself. Next afternoon we went back to Bruxelles and had two days there, but Brussles isn't the place it used to be, and all the Belgians look too, too appalling out of uniform, so I was very pleased to get back to comfortable old Cologne again, and have dances going for the next three nights.

Then I suppose I will have to go back to Brussles again to fetch the car - what a life it all is - .

I am so glad you have got something definite about the car, but, my dear, don't let any man learn on your car - he would indeed be an expensive chauffeur, and really if things are going well in the farming line I don't see why you shouldn't have a decent chauffeur-gardener.

What about South America? I am most frightfully keen to go. In fact I have set my heart on it, as I have really worked pretty hard, and the good time I have had is entirely of my own making.

Must go now darling, with ever so much love and do write to me soon.

From Trilby

8 Rosecroft Avenue  
Hampstead

My darling Mother,

Here I am in London at last - have only arrived about an hour ago. We left Cologne last Saturday, five of us, a very cheery party. We were late in starting but the cars went well and our first stop was the frontier. We got across all right, but the other car was stopped so we went back from them. There was rather a large tax to pay, and it took two hours to persuade them to take a cheque, then after that we had a lot of carburettor trouble and the other car wouldn't start, and we lost our way several times, so didn't arrive in Brussles until nearly 4, all looking rather the worse for wear. However we all tidied up and started off in search of food, but found nothing open so waited until 5 and had a miserable meal in the station buffet then went to bed until lunch, then went on to a show, then tea and danced, dinner and danced, then Birch-Reynardson and Squirrel Mackay-Lewis caught the midnight train back to Cologne, leaving Marjorie Howard, Mr Bailey and myself feeling very disconsolate. We really had a topping time. We were all tremendous friends, and in spite of all our troubles no-one was the slightest bit peevish.

We meant to start off on Monday morning via Calais, but found that to go into France you had to pay (a) deposit (of) 42 per cent of the value of the car, which ran to about £400. Of course the bank wouldn't cash us a cheque for that amount as it didn't know either of us, so off we dashed to the Embassy where I knew General Lyon, and he rang up the bank to say we were all right, but the bank wouldn't give us the money without a guarantee, which we couldn't get.

We had two very jolly days in Brussles then Mr Bailey got a wire telling him to return so we went to Antwerp and came by Harwich. The most comfortable journey I have ever done - I slept all night, and had a great struggle to get up in time to get off the boat by 9.30. Arrived here just in time for lunch, but found Nen and Bert out, and they haven't come in yet which is disappointing, but they may turn up at any moment.

I will be home about Tuesday I think, and am longing to see you all again. I am afraid I won't be able to afford many clothes, but have some shopping to do.

With ever so much love dearest, from Trilby

8 Rosscroft Avenue  
Hampstead

My darling Mother,

Thanks ever so much for your letter. I will be home on Wednesday night by the 8.20 train, and am so looking forward to seeing you again.

Nen came back on Friday, they have had a splendid tour. On Sat Nen and I shopped all morning, then lunched at the Berkeley with Bertie and Tim Arthur, we saw Drew there also, then we went on to see "The Skin Game" which was simply splendid.

On Sunday it poured solidly all day, however I motored down to Eton then went on to Maidenhead for tea and dinner. It is the great river place, but it was completely spoiled by the rain.

Today Nen and Bertie have gone to an hotel in town, I lunched in town with some people and went to Ranalagh, but there weren't nearly as many people there as usual. Tomorrow I am lunching at the Savoy, and shopping with Nen beforehand.

No more news now dearest,

With ever so much love, from Trilby

(Burma Rifles headed paper)

The Fort  
Mandalay  
Burma

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Jan 3<sup>rd</sup>

Darling Mother,

I am afraid I missed the mail last week, but we had a very hectic time over Xmas and no time for anything.

I must say Mandalay at Xmas time is marvellous. For a week we just go on hard. Dances and dinner parties every night, until very late in the morning, and through the day there is always lots of good polo to watch. A horse show at which I was riding, and the jumping was really excellent. A very well run gymkhana, with a lot of mounted events, at which I did no good, and a motor car obstacle race which Dan and I won very easily. Really the best dace of the week was one to which we went all dressed as "toughs" in our oldest clothes. We dined with some people who had done up their dining room like a low pub. Bare trestle tables, and benches to sit on, candles in bottles, and in the dance that followed everyone was at the top of their form, so much so in fact that it made the next night or two seem rather flat.

On Xmas Night we dined at the Sapper Mess, everyone rather tired but a good evening for all that. The last night of all was a Fancy Dress Ball, and it really was marvellous and went on until four, and now we all feel too tired and flat for words, and our pay has been horribly cut, so it is a case of the most rigid economy. Dan has gone out to camp for two months, and it is all rather miserable and horrible.

With ever so much love to you both, and be sure and write soon, and tell Kate I was awfully disappointed not to hear from her for Xmas. Trilby

Mount Pleasant  
Singapore

Feb 23<sup>rd</sup>

My darling Mother,

I wasn't able to write to you last week as I was on the boat, so hope Tom did it for us.

I came down here on Thursday to stay with the Norman Whitbys (Whitley/Wheatley?) and really then have given us a topping time - but strenuous - very.

The first morning I arrived we went out shopping, went for tennis at Lady Shaw's, the Lord Chief Justice place, and met a lot of people. Lady Guillermo (mont?) was the only person I knew though. Then danced at the Europe Hotel. Glorious band and floor, which quite spoils one for the E & D at home. Friday tennis and a club dance, and Sat tennis and another dance at the Europe Hotel. On Sunday I went to Government House for tea and tennis, unfortunately it rained, so the Navy, who were supposed to play with us, didn't turn up, and we just played with the two ADCs. Had some people for dinner afterwards and played bridge.

Did a lot of shopping yesterday morning, and four sets of hard tennis in the afternoon. Norman Wheatley is the most energetic person on earth, she is awfully sweet, and has a nice baby 4 months old so doesn't play tennis. Lady Guillemond (?) rang up last night and asked me for tennis today, and apologised for her lack of party on Sunday - awfully sweet of her to bother I thought, but we are all foxed (?) up. Had lunch yesterday at the 'Europe' with Filmer, a Penang man. Dining and dancing at the Europe tonight, and go home tomorrow. This is a much gayer place than Penang, but I miss riding and bathing.

Tons of love, from Trilby

14 Boundary Road,  
Rangoon,  
Burma

March 14<sup>th</sup>

My darling Mother,

I don't know what you will think of me as I don't seem to have written to you for ages, but honestly I have been so fearfully busy it has been difficult to manage, and I told Tom he was to write for me - also you haven't done too well yourself in the way of writing of late.

Well, I had a fearfully hectic time in Penang after I came back from Singapore - farewell dinners every night, Marjorie Cooper and her fiance came down to stay: a very happy couple, and we were just going from morning until night, generally ending up with ham and eggs at the swimming club at 2 in the morning after bathing.

I had a very good journey up here, fresh and cool, but it isn't like Penang at all. All very much burnt up and brown, though quite pretty in parts, and the people!!! I have never in all my life heard so much Glasgow spoken, and everyone seems to be Scotch. Mrs Laidlaw(?) is awfully sweet, and they have a topping house and I am quite enjoying myself, have been playing a certain amount of tennis, and dancing quite a lot: they have a topping club. I think I am going up country next week if Mrs Sharpson(*Thompson?*) can take me, as I feel I ought to see something of the country, and sail for Ceylon on the 10<sup>th</sup> of April, and hope to meet Tom in Colombo, and we will both have a month in Ceylon, and I sail for home on May 14<sup>th</sup> so should be home about the middle of June.

I am afraid we will have to get another maid in for three months through the summer, as there will be a good deal doing, and Nen will be down I suppose at Burnfoot. I wonder if they are as difficult to get as ever. I wonder if "Lilly Williamson" would come back - she is such an excellent servant and was so happy with us.

Now don't you bother about it, but tell Kate that she has to look out for an extra one for you, I do want Tom to enjoy himself. He really is the nicest man I have ever met, and he is looking forward so tremendously to this summer, and I can't bear to think of him being disappointed, and it is so impossible if we are in a "hubble" all the time, and it will only be for three months.

When I came back from Singapore Tom had firmly made up his mind to send me up to China and Japan for the trip. I should have loved it of course, but really I feel I have been so expensive already, I simply couldn't go. But I do want him above everything to enjoy this summer.

Tons of love dear, write to me next to Ceylon, Trilby

Boundary Road Rangoon 14march

Maymyo Club,  
Upper Burma

March 29<sup>th</sup>

My dearest Mother,

Well here I am up here, and really having a lovely time. I managed to get into the Club, and really it is most awfully nice: very comfortable, and the food is good.

It was a twenty four hour journey up, but really I didn't mind it a bit: it wasn't very hot, and as I was pretty tired I managed to sleep very well indeed. I came up with two other women, so wasn't a bit lonely. Of course I was really rather dreading coming all by myself, and scarcely knowing anyone, however Mrs Laidlaw wrote to the Thompsons to look after me, and really they have been topping. Mr Thompson and Captain Morley the ADC met me at the station, and Lady Fane (?) sent her car, then I went straight to the Thompsons for tiffin. Rode with Mr Thomson in the afternoon, and really the riding is too lovely for words. Wide paths cut through the jungle all over the place. Then I dined with the Thompsons and Captain Morley. They are a very cheery couple, and have given me a topping pony to ride whenever I like. The country is lovely and just like home, except that it is a wee bit burnt up.

Lady Fane has been awfully sweet to me - I was there for the evening and bridge on Wed. They have a lovely house and garden, but everything is all packed up now, and they come into the Club tomorrow. I am most awfully glad I came here instead of staying with them, as I am so very much more independent, and everyone has been so good to me. I have had tennis every day and am booked up every day until I go, which will be tomorrow week.

I go down with the Fanes, and sail as far as Colombo with them. Dined with the Thompsons last night, and dining with a man called Smith tonight, and dance afterwards. Tomorrow we are going for a picnic to look at the highest bridge in the world. Either I ride or bathe in the mornings, but the water is most awfully cold after Penang. It's an awful pity I have to leave here so soon with the week just coming off. I would give anything to stay, but it can't be managed, and I really feel I am being rather a beast not staying longer in Ceylon with Peg, but really I love Burma. Rangoon is all burnt up and dusty, and at first I thought the people so absolutely appalling, and just as I was leaving I was beginning to know some topping people, and to find my feet. I will have only two days there on my way back.

You have no idea how awfully kind everyone has been to me here. Of course knowing the Fanes and Thompsons helped a lot. Poor old Harry has just gone home to have an operation, and as he has to be home(?) in India by the end of June I will just miss him again, isn't it a pity. I should like awfully to go down to Mandalay, but it's so awfully dusty and hot, so I don't suppose I shall manage it.

Must go now and have a meal. Ever so much love, from Trilby

Maymyo Club 29mar



Battery Hill,  
Maymyo

April 11<sup>th</sup>

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Dearest Mother,

I am afraid I missed the mail last week, but as you missed last mail we are quits.

This is going to be a very short letter as I had a very late dance last night and am feeling distinctly part worn. We have started the "week" and I am dining out every night next week and going on to a dance of some sort; tomorrow night to a play, a great treat here where we never see anything of the sort. Then there is polo to watch every afternoon, and I am also playing in a tennis tournament but don't think we will do much good.

It is all great fun though, and I love being up here. So far we have got on all right with the Columbines (?) with whom I am sharing the house, do hope it will last. My clothes are getting a bit past their best now, however they will have to do. The heat of Mandalay is very hard on them.

No more news to tell you now. With every so much love to you both, and don't forget to write to me, and also to enclose the other family letters.

From Trilby

Battery Hill  
Maymyo

May 8<sup>th</sup>

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Darling Mother,

No letter from you for ages, you really mustn't get into such bad habits as I hate not hearing from you, and Kate never writes to me at all. I hear occasionally from Aunt Lizzie and Barbara McMyn and they tell me all the Kirkcudbright news.

We have been having quite a cheery time up here. Last night some people gave a party of 20 for dinner at the Club and danced afterwards. A very good party, there are still a lot of people in Maymyo as it is still pretty hot down in the plains. We are up until the first of July, then Dan may have to go over to India on a course for three months, in which case I shall stay up here, as Mandalay is still pretty hot, about 110 degrees in the shade.

I have been playing a good deal of bridge, but no contract, everyone has taken lessons, and no-one seems to bother with it very much at parties or at the Club. I had eight for bridge the other day. I don't like eight nearly so much as a four, as you don't get nearly such amusing gossip. I wonder if you still play a lot?

Things seem to be pretty bad in South America. There is a woman here whose brother is head of Gibbs in Valparaiso and he says that they are in a very rickety position. I am so sorry for poor Bertie, who was worried and harassed enough in all conscience when they were making about (£?L?) 15,000 a year, so what he can be like now I can't begin to think. I do wonder what Michael will do - it seems so extraordinary that he shouldn't go into Duncan & Fox. I hear Rosa (Rose?) has gone back to Valparaiso.

Must go and bathe now, with ever so much love to you both, and do write to me soon and tell me all the news, fr Trilby