

Apr. 13, 1945
Germany

Darling,

And so, as we have dreaded and feared, it has come to pass. The President is dead; and President Truman is America's choice to lead her through the most difficult and ticklish years, perhaps, of the world's history. The reaction of every G.I. with whom I've talked is a sense of loss of strong leadership. Whatever the missteps and faults of Roosevelt, and however one may oppose some of his thinking and his policies, he inspired men to trust him as a leader and to put their faith in him to guide them to a better future. In the eyes of the World, America has lost her best talent and individual strength. And because of this opinion, it is true that we approach the peace tables in a much weakened position. Mr. Truman's task is doubly difficult by virtue of the respect foreign ministers held for his predecessor. The times are pregnant with possibilities, and the strength of our democracy as such is squarely on the test. Of this more anon.

Today has been a very interesting one. Because the patient flow has become light, I took the afternoon off and drove up to the 48th, where it now has moved. They are in luxurious quarters at the moment. Everyone seemed quite happy to see me, and one got the impression of being missed. Ernie was in the usual jovial form. They have not been very busy. We drove through the plains country where the war passed so quickly there has been little damage; the civilian population is little disturbed. Farmers plow and sow, and people shop, and life goes on. They are sullen and uncommunicative. I shall write you more at length of the problem as one sees it now in the civilian attitude, and its relation to our problems of the peace.

The big cities to the south have just recently been taken. Some of the factories which have been bombed are extraordinary spectacles. One, a large synthetic oil plant, about the size of the Chrysler set-up in Detroit, is a forest of twisted girders, charred buildings, and big craters. It is an impressive sight of the destructive might of air-power.

The fruit blossoms are in full bloom, the days are warm and sunny. Spring is surely come.

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