

PART III

Country Woman Goes to Europe



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A NOTE FROM THE
TRAVELS EDITOR

Parts of Middle Tennessee, particularly that area around Columbia, were on the edge of the plantation country of antebellum days. In 1918, when Mother and Daddy were married, he bought a portion of one of those former plantations—70 acres that included the former manor house.

The house was two-story, with large columns on the front. The windows, first and second floor, were large, and under each first floor window was a set of wooden doors. Neighborhood myth had it that when the Confederate troops had been in the area, soldier husbands and sons of the family

that lived there then would slip home and tap on those doors at night to be let in.

The interior of the house was also large in scale. All rooms were 18 feet square, with 12-foot ceilings, and each room had a large fireplace. Written on a basement wall was the date, 1835. The large front hall had a wide, graceful stairway. Mother always said she looked forward to seeing me descend that stairway when I would be married in front of an open fire in the living room. That happened in December, 1941; when I was married to Stanton Morgan, originally from Dover, Tennessee, and a classmate from the University of Tennessee.

Lera and Alex sold the farm to a phosphate company shortly after that. Jack had joined the Air Force on the day after Pearl Harbor, received a medical discharge, then moved to Evansville, Indiana, where he became involved in building fighter planes.

The old house had no electricity, and as an elderly woman said of the Tennessee Mountains, “They’re purty to look at, but they’re hell to live in!” Not long after Mother and Daddy moved to another farm and started a new restaurant, a tornado went through the country and took the old house down—our version of “Gone with the Wind!”

I soon became a camp follower as Stan was transferred around the United States, and then to Europe. With the 94th Division he went through France, the Battle of the Bulge, and across Germany to Czechoslovakia. He signed up for the Army

of Occupation, came home to the States to get me, and we wound up in Germany.

The next summer Mother decided to make the trip to Europe, also, and the following summer, too. Just as the trip to the West Coast was covered in the *Nashville Banner*, the segments that follow were first published in the *Daily Herald* of Columbia, Tennessee.

Margaret Knox Morgan

THE DAILY HERALD
COLUMBIA, TENNESSEE
WEDNESDAY, MAY 21, 1952

Country Woman Goes A-Flying

Editor's Note: Mrs. Lera Knox, experienced writer for newspapers as well as accomplished farm and business woman, left this morning for a European tour to visit her daughter in Germany. Below is the first of a series of articles she will write for the *Daily Herald* and the *Maury Democrat*.

BY LERA KNOX

Well, here goes!
Believe it or doubt, in this good month of May, 1952, anything can probably happen—once.

Four days ago I had no idea that this old country gal would ever fly through the air on anything else but a broomstick.

Now I hear tell that I am to leave Nashville at 11:25 this morning and arrive in New York City at something after 4 p.m. the selfsame day. How's that for surprise?

They say something about the best laid plans of mice and men, but they seem not to have considered the (perhaps) better laid plans of women. Well, those can "gang aft a'glee," or aglay, or away, or wherever the plans of mice and men go.

My flying to New York, strange to say, can partly be blamed on, or credited to, the new highway. When the *Herald* and

Democrat reported that U.S. 31 would be closed, the man who had leased our little open air farm market and grocery on the Pulaski road got discouraged and decided he wanted to cancel his agreement—and that, when I was to leave by bus for New York en route to Germany.

That meant we had to hustle around and get someone to help Alex operate the grocery, in addition to keeping up the farming and other activities. We found Mrs. Kincaid, and her son, L.C., and I think they'll do a bang-up job.

We had to take inventory and figure up all that, measure gas in the tanks, and do all the odds and ends of things that have to be done when a business makes a change—then we had to scratch up some change to pay for that inventory; and now after scratching around for about three-and-a-half 28-hour days I feel changed myself.

But today I'm heading for Nashville and the big DC6 (or 7 or 8 or something-or-other). My aeronautical arithmetic is about as bumfuzzled as my aeronautical knowledge.

In New York—

(Wow! What a time this country bumpkin will have in that town!) I am to be at the Paramount Hotel—thanks to a good travel agent—for three nights. Then at high noon on Saturday, May 24, when the big superliner *Liberté* watches New York wharf move off and leave her, I'll be right there—Cabin 755D—with my brand new far-seeing glasses; my new poodle

hair-do, under last year's tam; my 8-quart size over-the-shoulder bag; my three-and-a half grips; umbrella and dual-purpose raincoat, for England; second-hand typewriter, which spells like a post office pen; my Kodak, Jr., which I'll try to keep hidden, so I won't look so much like a tourist; and a various assortment of other et cetera.

The folks who own the *Liberté* declare they will take all that, and me too, to Le Havre, in six days for \$175 plus \$5 head tax—I don't like taxes but I feel obliged to take my head along.

Margaret and Stan, our daughter and son-in-law, plan to meet the boat if Stan's leave is granted; if not, I go to the Hotel Franklin Roosevelt (they speak English) in Paris; then perhaps on to Frankfurt, or wherever they meet me along the way.

We plan first to visit the Benelux Nations; and perhaps to England. I look forward to saying, "So this is London." I'd like to watch them change the guard; and to peek over the back fence at Elizabeth's Garden, if the busy Queen has had a chance to make one this spring.

Of course, Switzerland will be a must. Meg and Stan seem to think that is the most ideal country in Europe; they like the Swiss people very much. Wouldn't it be fun if I could run across the woman I met in Washington in 1936 at the Triennial Meeting of Country Women of the World? I'll never forget how she astounded the other 7,500 of us country women with the bragging statement that even then every home in Switzerland had electricity! It struck me forcibly because over in the

enlightened area of Neeley Hollow, Maury County, Tennessee, U.S.A., I was filling lamps and ironing by fireplace heat.

Back to the Big Journey: I plan to see everything that is see-able so I am taking along two pairs of bifocals, and when one pair gets tired of looking I can change to the other.

I must chat with Tilman Knox in Munich, and two or three others of the Knox nephews in the same vicinity. And by the way, I'd just love to have dinner, supper, or a snack with your son George, Bill, Hal, or Tom or Jerry—I may need a gigolo, and I'm too Scotch to hire an escort when Meg and Stan can't go. Alex says he won't care, that is if I can save a few Knox nickels. He's Scotch, too.

And I'd love to visit your daughter Sue, your cousin Betty, or your Aunt Mary—I'll need to borrow a lot of kinfolks in Europe if I stay till my ticket runs out in September.

Any card or letter addressed to Stan will reach me. He is

Capt. Stanton A. Morgan
2nd Bn. 8th Regt. 4th Inf. Div.
A.P.O. 39% P.M.N.Y.N.Y.

I may not have time to write you back how your kin folks are behaving over there, except through the *Herald* and *Democrat*, because I'll be so busy changing bifocals, but I'll tell you plenty when I get home, I bet.

But after all the turmoil I've had getting off, I wonder if I'll ever get there all in one piece.

Yours on the way to be a-flying, a-floating, and a-seeing.

THE DAILY HERALD
COLUMBIA, TENNESSEE
THURSDAY, MAY 22, 1952

SOCIETY CLUB NEWS

Country Woman Goes Fast

BY LERA KNOX

Editors Note: The following story was received by wire special to the *Daily Herald* from Mrs. Alex Knox in New York, who left Wednesday for a four months stay in Germany during which she will tour Europe.

Bulletin—

I left the *Herald* Office at 9:30 a.m. Wednesday and by devious detours because of road blocks arrived in Nashville at 11:30—that was the only leisure lap of my journey. At 2:30 I was in the nation's capital and at 3:50 the plane settled down to a stop at La Guardia Field—but I didn't stop!

At 5:30 I was backstage at the Kate Smith evening hour, ready to help her if she needed me. To my surprise and chagrin she didn't. Fascinated, I saw the show through, thus missed an intended date to be one of Arthur Godfrey's friends. The crowd was lined up for blocks to see him stalk around the stage.

Tennessee hillbillies really stole the show! The crowd was wild about June Carter, Anita, Cousin Joedy, Cedar Hill square dancers. And when Kate wound up the show by singing “Tennessee Waltz,” she paved New York for me.

Every time I say “Howdy Doo” to anybody, the answer is “Oh! You’re from way down South!” Us Rebels might win that war after all!

At 7:30 (OGT—ours and God’s Time), 9:30 (EDT) over a 30-cent Automat dinner, I was chatting with a Mrs. (Obviously Rich) Williams about what to do with caterpillars on Park Avenue, and how to make rose geraniums bloom in a north window. I told her she would have to ask Mama, Mrs. D.A. Vaughan, back in Columbia about geraniums.

At 9:05 (OGT) but bedtime (New York Time), I was backstage at *Guys and Dolls*, (STO—Standing Room Only). A gorgeous blond was showing me how to push instead of pull to get the door open. She was lovely and she knew I was from Tennessee.

The story of my flight up here will follow by mail. It was really out of this earthy world—and may take a whole edition.

P.S. New Yorkers are grieving tonight over the death of John Garfield, but rejoicing over the Dodgers making a world record of 15 runs in one inning.

THE DAILY HERALD
COLUMBIA, TENNESSEE
MAY 24, 1952

Country Woman Flies High

BULLETIN

New York, Saturday a.m.—Was escorted to pier by a parade of Boy Scouts. Almost missed boat. She (the boat) waited. Now Country Woman is “all aboard.”—Lera Knox

BY LERA KNOX

New York—

Aboard the A.A. Flagship *Arizona*, belted to a window seat, insured for \$5,000—cost only a quarter—I seemed the only nervous person about.

I twist and crane my neck trying to see what's over, under, and beyond both big wings, wonder if any celebrities are aboard. But everyone on there looks like just ordinary folks—except of course the crew—and everybody is reading, or chatting, or just sitting as though they were on an ordinary bus or train. But not me! There was nothing ordinary about this experience for me. And those others couldn't fool me—I knew good and well that every other person on that plane had made at least one first flight.

The thing that struck me first as Tennessee farms slipped out from under that right-hand wing flap and got smaller and smaller was the way the little creeks seemed to nuzzle up against the river like pigs around an old sow, and the cute little brown ponds looked like baby chicks squatting in the green grass; very short grass, it must have been.

At first, I could see cows and recognize them for what they were, but I couldn't see them switching their tails, and even with two pairs of bifocals, I couldn't see any flies on those cows.

In a moment or two, I noticed white smoke coming from under the flaps, and I thought sure Alex would collect that \$5,000—but, no, we were up in the clouds.

As I looked at my native state from there, I could appreciate more and more the slogan, "Keep Tennessee Green."

Thirty-seven minutes to Knoxville, and lunch enroute, the stewardess said. Now the houses that looked like pinheads are getting larger, and roads that looked like thread are as big as pencil marks. Are we coming down? Must be—engines are un-revving. Can see propellers go slower and slower. Wow! Concrete's not as soft as the clouds.

While we stopped at Knoxville, Bearden School children filed through to see the plane. Curious, I followed. The Captain or somebody in uniform took me to be a teacher or student and graciously started to usher me off with the school gang. I said, "Say, I paid \$59.23 to go to New York and I want my money's

worth.” Was his face red! He exclaimed to a buddy, “Bill, she’s a passenger.”

Up again, I believe I am looking down on the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. Below—a muddy little river has a yellow streak along one side. Must have rained up country. There are so many big lakes, somebody must have made a dam. From the map, it must be Douglas Dam.

You’ve heard of being big by a dam site. This lake must be by a dam site bigger. (Even a preacher might read that, if a copyman doesn’t change my spelling.)

It’s a bee-a-u-ti-ful day for flying! So clear, I could almost reach out and pat the Smokies on their heads, except that my window is closed. We’re definitely above the clouds and we seem also to be above the sun for he just shines in my south window when we go down below the clouds again. Barns and houses look one-sixteenth inch square, set in a bright and cloudy field-scape down there.

God must love shifting sunshine and shadows over His earth below!

Wish I had a thermometer out on my wing so I could tell how cold or hot it is out there.

Looking down on the clouds is like looking down on a cotton field, white for picking, except that the foliage is hazy blue, and field-dotted with miniature towns when we can glimpse through the “Cotton.” If a giant Paul Bunyan could stride

through with an oversize cotton-picking bag, I'd bet he'd harvest many a cloud-ton of the acre.

Wish they had markers on the towns down there so I could see where I am, geographically speaking.

I used to love to look up at the shapes of clouds and imagine one was a house, another a horse, or an elephant, or a Santa Claus, or an old woman smoking her pipe. Now, I'm looking down at the shapes of the clouds' shadows on the ground. I see a Christmas tree, dark green; a sausage patty—it's green, too, and right beside it is a huge green doughnut. Could it be that my eyes are influenced by the two years I served sausage and doughnuts at our little Knoxdale Café before I leased it to make this trip?

Clouds are thinner, fields are clearer. Maybe we are easing up on Richmond? I see a wide, straight, green strip that may be a fire break or a power line clearing.

We are going 260 miles an hour, they say, but really the propellers are the only things about the plane that seem to be moving, and they seem only a blur of air, such as you see rising from a stove on a cold day. It's the beautiful earth that is the magic carpet slipping out from under the wing like a rug from under a chair.

No clouds below at all, now. Wide double highway down there. We must be coming to a town. We are. Big city sprawled out like the letter "Y." Airport like an "A," with an oversized

crossbar. Apple orchards galore. They look like green-sprigged calico.

I see a long slope. Could that be Shenandoah Valley? I've once seen that from below, but it didn't look that way.

Faithful old propellers. I can turn away and look at the landscape, and when I look back at them, they're still going. Bless them! I'm praying for them, for I'd feel awful bad to have Alex collect that \$5,000 insurance that I paid a quarter for at the airport. I'd rather lose that quarter, and a lot more, than lose altitude suddenly by prop failure.

Another lovely river and wide bands of green and brown running around the hills. Wherever there are dams there are those beautiful striped green fields. I'm getting my T.V.A. taxes' worth in the beauty of those fields, contour-striped in bands of two-tone green and brown.

Another town, the landscape looks like a crazy quilt with patches of green and brown, each patch is bordered in fancy stitching, gray highways, yellow roads, black railroads, deep green rivers, and brown little creeks.

It's a far piece across this land of America and there are lots of little farmhouses like ours. "Knoxdale Farms" might not look so important to an air passenger 7000 feet high, as it does to me there at home in the garden.

Big forest. We must be topping a mountain. I'm yawning more and the clouds are getting thicker.

Now, the country below is beautiful and I want to tell James A. Lavender (our beauty loving neighbor) that I really have seen something else as beautiful as Maury County hills. I know now what it is. We're coming into Washington, D.C. There are sand barges on the river below. Here is the airport.

As quick as that, we're down, and beside us a big plane labeled "Canadian Royal Air Force." The control tower above looks like a big turquoise jewel in a high platinum mounting setting.

Washington—three hours after leaving Nashville!

I'm enjoying this trip so much that I think as soon as I get back I'll dust off my old Spanish dictionary and start out for Mexico, American Airlines.

While the engine warms up to go again, the *Arizona* has the motion of curbed power. It reminds me of holding a spirited horse in check—albeit a powerful big mustang, with plenty of spirit!

I didn't realize how many people might be working in that air business until I watched various matters handled with so much efficiency and dispatch in Washington, D.C. It was amusing to see them pull long squirmy black gas lines out of pits under the plane and drag them up on to the wings to refuel my friend *Arizona*. They looked like Paul Bunyan fishing worms.

I should like to have stayed at Washington airport thirty days rather than fifteen minutes.

Off again at 2:45. Gee, but those props are revving. I'm getting airport talk now, you see.

I wish the nice people in Washington would put their names and house numbers on their roofs. However, it was nice of them to paint those roofs all shades of red, blue, and green.

There goes Lincoln Memorial, Washington Monument, but I don't see the Capitol dome.

Those airline stewardesses have had nurses' training, so I've heard. Well, they have certainly transferred their bedside manners to wonderful seat-side manners.

For a few minutes, things almost got bumpy. It reminded me of riding over Bigbyville Road in a Model-T on frozen ruts. But the stewardess began passing mints and chatting in such a friendly manner I even forgot to nibble the nuts.

Now, the cotton clouds below have slipped off and left a hazy blue-green floor. Could that be water? It must be. Here's land again.

Land, water, clouds—all moving along westward—and we're just sitting up here watching them. We must be just east of Baltimore or is it Philadelphia?

Now, we're all in snow. The clouds are completely white, except for occasional blue shadows to make them interesting. Those clouds give one a comfortable feeling. They look so soft to fall into, but I still don't want Alex to collect that insurance.

It's getting a little rougher at 3:30, and white all over, but my nerves are much more calm now than they were a few hours

ago when Alex was whipping our old Plymouth along over the Bear Creek Road detour through the metropolises of Pottsville, Leftwich, Rally Hill, and Match, Tennessee. I feel more safe here than I did on those curves.

This must be Philadelphia. It looks as clean as a picture postcard and there's a big cemetery then more water. No, I'm wrong. It's New York—La Guardia Field.

When I started to leave my seat, I seemed more attached to that flagship than I realized. I made several efforts to rise, but each time I sat back down. I unloaded the bundles from my lap and tried again. Again—down. Then I noticed that my seat belt really did hold. I hadn't trusted it too much at first. I unstrapped and walked out into a stiff breeze and a lot of jabbering lingo. Was I at Le Havre? No, just New York—and a lot of "dose guys" must have hailed from down on Toity-Toid Street.

THE DAILY HERALD
COLUMBIA, TENNESSEE
MONDAY, MAY 26, 1952

Country Woman Goes A-Rambling

New York—

National Broadcasting Studios seem to have been searching the city for me Thursday afternoon from four to six, and where was I? Rambling around The Cloisters, like a good girl should!

It seems that they did not take into consideration the fact that, coming from The Bible Belt, Land of the Coonskin Cap, I might gravitate toward anything that looked like a cathedral or a woody spot—that's The Cloisters. Will tell you more about it or them when I have time to look at my guide book, but for now, can only say it seems to be a sort of religious museum perched high above the Hudson in a natural-looking, master-size, rock-garden—and you know how I am about rocks and gardens.

You see, I simply can't stay off those blessed 5th Avenue busses. I can get more for my money there than anywhere else, even the Automat. I'm not exactly certain about this, for I was too busy seeing to count, but you can ride 200 blocks on one of those busses for 12 cents. Maybe it's only 198, but to be sure I got my money's worth. I got off the bus at the end of the line

and walked two blocks. 200 blocks for a dime and 2 pennies. That's a bargain even to a Scot!

But back to NBC and why they were hunting me instead of me hunting them, when broadcasting studios seem easier to find in New York than Country Women.

The penciled scribblings I made on the Flagship *Arizona* were so shaken up by the time I got to the Hotel Paramount, I couldn't make them all out, so I took them downstairs to the public stenographer, for they say she can read anything—maybe even people.

The man at the next desk to hers heard us trying to read and dictate the stuff, and he must have been a tattletale, or at least to have the party line tendencies that makes one tell someone that tells someone.

Then, to be sure I had my air facts correct I called American Airlines to see if they would clear such an epistle as I was writing. Mr. Johnny Coneybear (no, the word *Island* doesn't go in the middle of the surname) a Public Relations Representative, met me in the Paramount Coffee Shop at lunch, and when we started to read that lady's typing, we found that although she can read anything, she can't exactly interpret Tennessee diction, having been in New York all her life. But Jack C. has been in Tennessee long enough to speak our language—he established the radio station at Oak Ridge, and operated a chain of newspapers once or twice—so he helped me interpret her typing, and respell and interline her copy.

The finished product wasn't very pretty and he hated for me to send the *Herald* and *Democrat* such a mottled copy, so he very graciously offered to have his secretary re-copy same and rush it by fastest A.A. plane to Columbia.

He asked if I would share a few carbons to show some of his friends. I said, "Sure, throw 'em away, if you wants." (See, I'm talking East Side already.)

He asked, too, if I would care if he tried to sell any of the stuff for me. Remembering the \$3 I'd paid that stenographer; and the tips; and the telegrams I'd sent back home, I gave him the green light but quickly.

When I returned at 6 p.m. to dress for a 40-cent dinner at the Automat, I found a message to call J.C. at Murray Hill 3-9000. Every phone number in New York must have 5 numbers, so the operator told me, "so we just add another zero and then see who we get."

Jack had already commuted to his home at Amityville, but his secretary was waiting up for me. He called Jack back at 8:00, Long Distance, and exclaimed, "Hasn't NBC found you yet? Where on earth have you been?"

"Bussing, as usual," was the answer.

"Well, NBC wanted you backstage for two shows this afternoon, but those shows are over now, better let them find you Friday."

I shall.

Friday: Bob Simmons has summoned me to his office (and he's not the City Judge, but Somebody at NBC) for orders or tickets or something to *Kate Smith Hour* and *We The People TV*. Also German Consulate General must visa my passport, so must hurry.

P.S. Special—

I find the New York Telephone Directory very handy in many ways, not necessarily in the way we country people are said to use a Sears Roebuck Catalog. But like the catalog, it's thick, and I find that with a little help from a waste paper basket planted underneath, I can use it for a typewriter desk. And this little second-hand portable, which spells like a post office pen, needs all the support that New York Public Utilities can give it.

The Telephone Directory probably has many other uses, too, if one is well versed in ABC's; but being from the allegedly barefoot South, I do a lot of my talking on the Information Line.

The Information Lady seems to know a lot of things, maybe even Chinese; but she must be sort of hard of hearing, or she doesn't understand TENNESSEE-ESE: I have to repeat everything I say, talk very slowly, and sometimes spell a word for her, Western Union style!

With her help, however, I find that, for all its bigness, New York has fewer wrong numbers than Columbia, sometimes.

THE DAILY HERALD
COLUMBIA, TENNESSEE
JUNE 12, 1952

Country Woman in New York

Mrs. Lera Knox Reports On Big Town

Editor's Note: This belated report on the activities of Mrs. Lera Knox, our globe-trotting correspondent, was mailed from Europe, where she is now visiting her daughter and family. Other dispatches will appear from day to day.

BY LERA KNOX

You love New York in June? How about May?
Well, May is OK, too.

Folks up here say they have been having a heck of a lot of rain, but the day I arrived the sun came out.

The big town, to me, is full of love, joy, and pity; and pardon my saying so, but among the objects I pity most, are the dogs. Poor beasts! Every dog I saw was dragging a mere man or woman around on a leash, and I regretfully noticed that some of the dogs seemed somewhat embarrassed at what was on the other end of the leash. But dogs have endurance; I know that from our own dogs' experiences at Knoxdale.

And New York is broadminded, I'm sure of that, but it does seem a shame that so large a part of the population can't let a poor canine live a dog's life.

Passing Central Park I noticed something that looked like a locust tree in bloom. That seemed strange, for I thought all black locusts had bloomed white and shedded weeks ago. In the Cloister gardens however, I saw the plain old purple iris, the first to bloom, the one we call flags, blooming among the rocks. That all goes to prove how far New York is behind Tennessee, botanically speaking.

But back to the sad and happy in New York: though dogs are to be pitied, cats seem to fare better. I saw a fat cat, marked like a Holstein cow, and apparently as contented, sleeping peacefully in a crowded delicatessen window on Sixth Avenue, "Avenue of the Americas," they call that now. I didn't stop there for lunch.

Most of my lunching and dining were done at the Automat. That is the place where you drop your nickels and dimes in a slot as you would in a juke box, but you get food, rather than music. Since the high cost of living has developed, they have added several slots for quarters. And it takes two nickels now to please the coffee slot enough to make it measure you out exactly one cup of coffee.

Rice and carrots are still classed as 5-cent foods, but everything else has gone up. I lived mostly on rice and carrots while in New York so I could save up for a cup of coffee at

Maxim's in Paris. But really all the food I tried tasted good. Some of the current theories on diet were exploded right before my eyes at the Automat.

A small, thin man came over to my table and set down three enormous servings of three different desserts. He quickly gobbled those up, then went back and got two more. Even then he walked out of that place a small, thin man.

By getting up early and taking a tramp down Broadway I had a chance to say "Good Morning" to the people who gather the garbage, clean the windows, and mop the sidewalks. They are New York, too, you know, as much so, perhaps more than the people who make the garbage and clutter the sidewalks the night before.

Upon being questioned, they thought it was a nice morning, that it was not likely to rain that day, and all that sort of stuff; but I continued to clutch my umbrella, for they say that anything can happen in a big city.

I find that people in New York are just as friendly as you want to make them. And also, they are glad if you want to make them friendly.

It seems hard to get an early breakfast on Broadway, and I didn't see a Truck Stop anywhere.

Childs' Restaurant in the corner of Duffy Square had a sign that said, "Open All Night." Perhaps so, I thought, but they seem to close in the morning. But walking on around the corner however, I saw six sleepy looking waiters, two waitresses, and a

cashier dozing. At least they were up, so I went in and asked if I could get a cup of coffee. All went into action. Even the cashier roused, and rubbed his eyes.

I looked at the clock, it was 5:00 a.m. I imagined the counter at Knoxdale Café would be about full at that time of morning. But I was alone with several service people, not including the cooks and manager at Childs. Rambling around the room, my eyes leveled off on a large sign which proclaimed: "Occupation of this room by more than 200 persons is both illegal and dangerous."

When I saw that sign and looked back at my lone self, I spluttered and burred so into my coffee, I had to have my coat cleaned when I got back to my hotel. But 5:00 a.m. is 5:00 a.m., and Childs' had probably needed that sign two hours earlier.

I saw several radio and television shows in the process of production or rehearsal. And I judged by the bits of conversation which I caught on streets, buses, and in lobbies, that the great summer onslaught of tourists is on.

Polls taken at audience participation programs proved the audience to be predominately out-of-towners.

At one time I could have tapped H.V. Kaltenborn on the shoulder, except for two reasons: (1) I didn't want to seem forward. (2) There was a double thickness of glass between us.

Lagging behind on a guided tour of NBC Studios as we passed the newscasting rooms, I noticed a large pink-faced, white-haired man with a sheaf of copy in one hand and a cup of

tea, with lemon, in the other, ease himself into the small room and take the place at the mike-desk. I stared curiously, and was just about to recognize him from his telecasts, when he turned around, smiled, and gave me a friendly salute. A glance at the clock told me it was five minutes until time for Kaltenborn. So I was practically certain of his identification, but I am not sure he recognized me.

I enjoyed the two Kate Smith programs very much. Kate is so much herself—and that is much indeed. I had an opportunity to see the *Old Gold Show* telecast, but feeling that I needed a treat instead of a treatment, I went instead to see *Guys and Dolls*. With standing room only, and that at \$2.40 per pair of feet, and seats at \$9.10, and not available, I decided that show must have something. It has. It is a ridiculous exaggeration on Broadway. And Broadway evidently loves to see herself ridiculed, especially with clever songs, gay costumes, and catchy dialogue.

I believe I mentioned getting lost backstage during the finale on Thursday night, and the lovely, friendly blonde who showed me how to open the stage door. Well, imagine my surprise on Friday night to see that very self-same blonde playing the “Doll,” Miss Adelaide, herself.

I knew it couldn't have been the same person, for the Star would have been obliged to be on stage for the finale, and yet, I knew almost definitely that the girl who opened the door for me and said, “You have to push hard against it, Honey,” on Thursday night was positively “Miss Adelaide” on Friday night.

I pondered and puzzled until I opened my “Standing Room Only” program. A slip of paper fell out; it said:

“At this performance the role of MISS ADELAIDE will be played by BEVERLY LAWRENCE.”

Evidently my escort of the evening before had been not the star herself—who was evidently on stage for the finale—but the star’s understudy who was giving Miss Vivian Blaine a Friday night off for a long weekend. But Vivian or Beverly, the show is great!

Even though I am as green as any tree that grows in Brooklyn, I get around in New York. I’d like to tramp from the Cloisters to Coney Island, from the Battery to Baker Field and talk and laugh with New York about herself. From *Guys and Dolls* I see she likes to laugh at herself. And I’d like to talk to New York about Columbia and vice-versa.

You two towns ought to get together sometime. The sum total of what you could each learn and enjoy about the other would indeed be a revealing tale of two cities.

But there isn’t time now. I must be off on my European Campaign. So New York will have to get along without me until September 29. That, however, should give her ample time to prepare my ticker-tape parade.

The *Liberté* sails at noon Saturday, and I shall probably be sitting on suitcases and trying to fasten them for the next six hours.

THE DAILY HERALD
COLUMBIA, TENNESSEE
FRIDAY, JUNE 13, 1952

Country Woman All At Sea

BY LERA KNOX



S.S. *Liberté* flagship of the French Line (Compagnie Générale Transatlantique)

Two natural tendencies that I follow with all ease are getting lost and being late.

Two of New York's noticeable tendencies are tightening belts and suitcases, and being in a hurry. We got along very well, however, until the time came for me to leave.

I didn't feel I could possibly get lost between the Paramount Hotel, on 46th Street, and Pier 88 at the end of 49th Street, especially if I took a taxi. As for being late—well I simply

wouldn't. So I got up at 5:00 a.m. on D-Day (D as in Departure). But by the time I had done a little packing, a little writing, a little primping, and a lot of loitering over breakfast, (the people who come into an Automat for breakfast in New York are a great part of the greatest show on earth), and by the time I was really ready to start my session of sitting on suitcases, it was getting about that time. Instructions for the *Liberté* said all passengers must be on board by 11:00 a.m. At 11:05 I was still sitting on suitcases.

The bell boy, elevator man, and taxi driver all helped with the rushing however; and at last we were taxiing down 49th Street, and just across the street from the pier when the Boy Scout Parade came marching right down the street we were ready to cross. It was a national or international or maybe just a local parade of boys coming down to see the ships. Sure I had a seat of honor; but it was getting to be a very uneasy seat. It was much after 11:00, people were scurrying, whistles were blowing, and I had visions of the *Liberté* pulling right out leaving me in what had been its shadow.

You can always count on a group of Scouts to stop to the rescue of a lady in distress, though. Of their own volition they stopped the parade and let the taxi pass. Porters of the French Line rushed out at double-New-York pace, gathered me, bags, and baggage into an elevator and rushed us up: then down a line of blue-coated inspectors who called for passport, tickets, baggage checks, blue slips, pink slips, what not, numerous other

addenda which were stuffed away down in the depths of what was by that time my 10-quart over-shoulder bag.

When I finally set foot, on what I thought was the ship, I feared that there was surely a mistake and that I had been ushered not on board a liner, but right into the midst of a mid-summer Bargain Sale, in Macy's Basement!

Really, if a ship was there, I couldn't see the ship for the people. It was men this time, not Boy Scouts, who slightly eased my hypertension. It couldn't be either Macy's, nor even Gimbel's, I thought, for that many men could never have been dragged to a bargain sale, either on land or sea! Then a whistle blew, and I was relieved again, for I didn't believe Macy's had a whistle like that—even though New York business does do a lot of "blowing."

But the crowd continued to distress me. If this were really *Le Liberté*, how on earth could Mrs. *Liberté*, or Madame, ever bed and board such a huge hunk of humanity for six days?

But the problem soon began to work itself out, a large part of the hunk began to scoot and be scooted down the gangplank to wave and weep from the pier and a large part of the remainder of the hunk crowded to the rail to do a bit of waving and not a little weeping from there.

Not me, however. I wanted to see if I really had a berth on that boat, so I started rambling. Six decks down, and one deck up; two halls over, three halls back, I found my 3 1/2 bags and typewriter.

How could Madam *Liberté* bed so many people? I soon found out. She stacks 'em up.

The “D” following the 755 on my east-bound ticket meant approximately 12 square feet of mattress space plus one plump pillow, located a little higher than my nose. Talk about Grandma’s four-posters! My bunk had no posts, and no automatic elevator; only a nervous looking little ladder up which I was to hoist my 140-odd pounds.

Why, I hadn’t skinned up a ladder like that since I used to climb up in the barn loft to look for eggs!



Besides, there were to be three other unknown persons in that 6'x10' room, plus baggage. One other would be on a par with me, nose high; the other two would be beneath us. I had heard that only the younger persons were given upper berths, and looking at myself in the mirror I wondered what kind

of “old bags” would be below.

I couldn’t do a thing but laugh and like it. My ticket was stamped. My grips were aboard. The gangplanks were gone. And the *Liberté* was by now high and dry—except the

evidently very large part of her which must be below the water.

Speaking of high, I decided to go up those umppty-odd stairways again and see what was going on upstairs.

In my going up flight after flight, ambitious to rise to the top, like good country cream, I passed a room that looked very interesting. A sign beside the door said "Salle a Manager, Dining Room." I glanced inside, and said to a jolly looking girl nearby.

"I think I'll like the dining room. I see that Sally is the manager."

She spluttered and explained: "Salle a Manager' is French for Room to Eat." I spluttered too, and we both rose toward the upper deck, or Pont. I was learning by then that all signs on the ship were written first in French then in English.

Why, oh why, hadn't I paid more attention at CHS when Prof. W. P. Morton was conjugating French irregular verbs, instead of spending so much time passing notes for Eldridge Denham, Eva Gilbert, and Elizabeth Voss; or writing notes to Erwin Hardison, Rufus Baker, and Bob Hunter? I can realize by now that those notes never got me anywhere, and a knowledge of French would really help me go places on a French Liner!

I didn't need French, however, to climb stairs, though I thought a liniment, French, Scotch, or British, might be needed by the time I got back down those stairs and up my ladder to bed that night.

But I kept climbing, and going in and out doors, stepping high over thresholds—when I didn't stumble over them.

At last I saw daylight, I went through that door, and there was the ocean again. She was still there. And the dock was right where I left it and the people were still waving and weeping and laughing.

When I began to take my bearings and inquire, I found that I must be slightly lost again.

Where I seemed to be was top deck First Class; where I was supposed to be was several decks lower, Tourist Class. (I later learned that "Pont" is "Bridge"—which may explain my lofty position.)

That country-cream policy of rising to the top seemed to have gotten me lost again. I didn't worry too much, however, for after all I didn't really know that I was in the wrong place until somebody told me, and nobody had told me yet. And by that time I had brushed enough of the 40 years of dust off Prof. Morton's French to remember "Je ne comprends pas le Français," or something like that, and I could still shake my head even though my knees were weak.

So I simply sprawled myself out in the most comfortable First Class deck chair that was empty, and it was from there, waving at people I never saw before, and rolling a couple of tears into the Atlantic, that I watched America leave me for the first time.

THE DAILY HERALD
COLUMBIA, TENNESSEE
TUESDAY, JUNE 17, 1952

Country Woman Breaks Ice

Or At Least Mrs. Knox Chips It

BY LERA KNOX

Atlantic Ocean, et al.—

Refreshed from a nice nap on deck, and not wanting to stare at the Atlantic and thus probably incur seasickness, I decided to look around at the people on board and see what they were like.

The conclusion on the whole matter was that everybody else was just like me; they wanted to be friendly but didn't know just how to go about it. I decided that somebody ought to break the ice, and it has frequently been my job to do the things that nobody else wanted to do, so I plunged in.

I grinned at the young man in the deck chair next to mine and said:

“Bon jour. It's a nice day, isn't it?”

He sat straight up, took off his sunglasses, looked at me, and said:

“Oh, you speak English! How nice! Now I’ll have somebody to practice my conversation with.”

He turned out to be an excellent young person, originally from Switzerland, but also somewhat world-traveled. He had been in the States for several months and was on his way back home, after a visit in Paris. He told me more about Switzerland than I could ever have learned from guide books. And he also enjoyed practicing his “conversation” on me. I gave him all the latest I knew in American slang; which was something he said he could not get from guide books, so we both made what was to us a very profitable international exchange.

Our conversation waked the girl on my left, and we soon had drawn her into the chatter. She was Amy Florio, of the Bronx, so that brought us in another dialect, and a lot of fun. She’s a “peach,” that Amy, and a “peck of fun.” She works at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, which she announced is “the largest and biggest and richest bank in the world, has five floors down under the street, and has stored gold bullion from all over the world though of course gold varies in its worth due to its alloy content,” all that, and a little more on one breath.

My Swiss conversationalist and I felt so much more financially secure after meeting Amy, I ventured to stagger, (a la sea legs) into the bar and spent 15 cents for a package of chewing gum to help us keep our stomachs steady until lunch, second sitting.

Amy didn't exactly offer to lend us any money, but we knew that she knew where to get it, so we felt that just knowing her had helped to steady our financial standing, if not our deck walking. We were going over "the banks" (Newfoundland, I think), and the waves were a bit whiter at that time.

Amy very generously offered to help me out with my typewriter, which by then was getting very sea-sick indeed. But after attempting one line she cussed it out in Bronx, which amused Switzerland very much, and gave it back to me. "Too slow," she said. "Throw it over board." That's all I can quote for publication.

Having two extra sticks of chewing gum, we coaxed into the conversation Amy's friend, who used to work for The Bank, but now is with The Government. The recipient of the fifth stick of gum was Carolyn Cantelli, a joy if ever there was one. She had just finished Parson's School of Design, and was traveling with 20 or more of her classmates on a European study tour. She introduced several of her friends, and I felt that my 15 cents for gum had been well spent.

Sharing cabin 755 with me and two elderly German-born American women is Miss Brigitta Stanfelt, of Sweden, who has been in America for 18 months, studying physical therophy,¹

¹ Therophy, n. —revolutionary blend of therapy and philosophy, designed to cure a patient's illness through greater understanding of the human condition.

weaving, and several other matters. She's a delight to know. She asked if she might give me a word of advice. "Certainly," I said.

"Well, while you are in Europe, don't act American," was the advice.

"Do you mean, 'Don't brag?'" She nodded, and a gesture said a lot of other things. Which I didn't quite understand but will try to follow, because I considered that advice quite a compliment, and very confidential. I always think of Brigitta as "The big Swede" but I don't call her that. She permits me, however, to call her "Leif," for short, as in Leif Eriksson. We had several discussions as to why Leif Eriksson didn't stay in the States once he arrived there, and how different the world might, or might not, have been if he had.

Leif continually shocked our other two cabin-mates, Madam Anna Hanke, and the other German woman, both of whose bodies have been in America for 35 and 43 years, but whose souls are still in Germany. Madam Hanke said she never had felt that America belonged to her. And the other woman said she had not bought a new dress for five years, had been saving everything to go to Germany in 1953, and now was afraid she would have to pay duty on her new wardrobe. She was very uneasy about customs.

About all the Big Swede and I ever saw of our two roommates were the tops of their very white "poodle haircuts" as they got up and dressed early in the mornings. I whispered to Leif that

we might as well stay in bed because there wasn't room for our feet on the floor until we had "expelled the Germans."

Leif's practice of going around completely in the nude shocked our neighbors greatly, but my opinion was that she had a figure she didn't need to cover up. I explained to Madame Hanke & Co. that really they could see there was not enough room in that cabin for four women and all their clothes, so as Brigitta was the last one in every night she had to leave her clothes outside to get into the cabin and up to her bunk

During the first couple of days out the Dining Steward was too busy to assign us to our proper tables, so it was catch-as-catch-can when it came to getting chairs. For the second dinner I caught a chair beside the big round table next to the kitchen door. The atmosphere was distinctly appetizing. Shortly after I sat down our table annexed Texas, Spain, and Paris.

Texas was there with triple strength in the forms of Steve, Tom, and Helen. Spain was represented by Luis Romano, accordion player from Madrid; and Paris by a plump little brunette exchange student to "Bryn Mawr" whose name I never did quite catch, and by Mr. E.C. Solari, or "Cam" for short, he said. There was also a young doctor of laws, who with Texas made a large part of the life of the party.

Steve, whose last name is Ely, is tall, straight, and blond, very tall. Tom, (whose last name is Connelly, and he's not the Senator, he says), is tall, dark; muscular and very handsome as is Steve. Helen is a sparkling middle aged attorney, also from

Dallas; she might have been the mother of either, and such a good sport that Tom and Steve had as much fun with her as with any traveling companion they could possibly have selected for an automobile tour of Europe. Their car was up in the garage on Boat Deck, and they had no particular plans. Steve said when they got the car on the ground again they were just “going to point her nose in any direction and follow through.” The trio were as jolly as any passengers on board, and aided and abetted by Cam, Luis, and the young DLL (is that doctor of laws?), and the French student, our table made so much noise we couldn’t hear the ship’s chugging, nor the clatter of pans in the kitchen.

Shortly after dinner, Texas annexed Sweden. Brigitta had so much fun dancing the Swedish schottische with those tall, lanky Texans everybody in the lounge stopped to watch them throughout the evening. Never before, I think, had she so much deserved the term “Big Swede.” She would swing Tom around and up and down the floor until he was exhausted enough to flop into a chair, then she’d take on Steve and give him the same treatment. They had their lessons in Swedish Physical Therophy that evening.

The palship between our neighbor Texas and our neighbor Sweden became so hearty, wholesome, and genuine I felt that the Atlantic would be re-salted by international tears when we docked.

Right here I'd like to advise the United Nations and whoever it might concern, that as a result of my un-congressional investigation during two days at sea, my one woman's opinion is that if we'd travel more, we'd fight less.

During a brief lull of the evening's fun, I said "Hello" to a boy in knee-pants, next chair to mine. He politely introduced himself as Guy Van Meenen, of Paris and U.S.A. He has been in the States eight months with his brother going to school. He is a very genteel young Parisian, son of a French editor, 13 years old, and an ardent admirer of the "Dodgers." He is carrying a baseball and bat back to Paris with him, and his ambition is to "teach my friends the great American game of baseball." From then on I called him "Le Ambassadeur du Baseball." And he always grinned when I said it, perhaps at my accent. I found in him the excellent interpreter, which I needed with the stewards.

The slender, blonde, very dignified young woman in the corner aroused my curiosity. She was alone, and not too unapproachable, I decided. In fact she seemed very glad to be approached. She was a bit homesick she admitted; had been in Johns Hopkins and other American hospitals.

I said, "Oh, you are ill?"

"Oh, no, I am a doctor. I study dermatology."

Later when I went down for the ship's doctor to inspect my smallpox vaccination, I mentioned meeting Dr. Weisenbach,

from Paris, and described her. He said she is the youngest M.D. ever to get a degree in France. She finished her medical studies when only 23 years old. Her father is one of the world's most famous dermatologists.

Later I mentioned having heard of her father. She was surprised.

"How did you know?" she asked.

"Oh, I get around," was my answer. And that is what I am trying to do.

Right here I want to nominate as the most peace-pactful words ever spoken or gestured on land or sea.

I was standing in the narrow hall near the dining room door waiting for second sitting, when I noticed a plump, smiling, very white-haired little lady at my elbow. I smiled and said, "Good Morning."

She smiled and shook her head, saying "No speaka."

Then I said, "Bon jour." She smiled even more, and said "No speaka."

So we both just grinned and shook hands.

Then it happened: She put her arm around my waist, held my hand, looked up at me, and said:

"I no speaka, you no speaka, but we all LOVE."

I sniffled and agreed, "Yes, *Liberté* and Liberty makes us all love everybody always."

I don't know who she was, I don't know where she came from, but the strange little woman, with the heart of a girl, had struck the keynote of the journey for me.

Seven languages could not have said as much as her smile and her warm, impulsive caress.

THE DAILY HERALD
COLUMBIA, TENNESSEE
THURSDAY, JUNE 19, 1952

Country Woman “Lion” Hunting

BY LERA KNOX

Ship’s rumors, like country gossip, spreads like blue mold on a tobacco bed. Belinda Timmons Priest, the Maury County product, whom I met the first day on board, told me that her husband had told her that he had read in the papers that “Sugar Ray” Robinson was to sail on the *Liberté*, May 24.

A former French war bride, now mother of four lively little Americans, who slept next cabin to ours, joined in the conversation with a frantic hand-clasp and the exclamation that sounded something like “Oh, Shugarre Ray Ro-ban-sogn!” And she made as though to do a Frank Sinatra faint.

“Well, if he’s here I’ll give him a knockout of an interview, and maybe I’ll get an autographed boxing glove for you,” I told the ex-bride. She beamed.

Using my “Laissez passes” I passed through four doors and up three flights to the Information Desk 1st Class. Mr. Information was busy, but while I was waiting for him a very nice looking young Negro woman came up near the desk, and was waiting, too. A large, also very nicely dressed and well

groomed Negro man followed her, and then another. I thought I would probably get more information from them than from the desk. I did.

I asked the woman if she knew whether Robinson was on board. She asked the man next to her, and he explained that Fighter Ray had not kept his date with the *Liberté*, because he had made another date to fight somewhere. We all introduced ourselves, then. The man asked if I was not from the South. How did he guess! I had only said to him "Thank you."

I told him I was from Columbia, Tennessee, very proudly. Then he asked if I knew of Meharry Medical College in Nashville. "Certainly," was my answer.

He turned out to be Dr. Edgar Keemer, graduate of Meharry, 1936, and his friends were Dr. and Mrs. Melvin Fowler, all of Detroit and all on their way to Scandinavia for the Summer Olympics. They are personally acquainted with Robinson, they said, and they told me more about him than he probably would have himself. But I didn't get the glove.

On my next venture into the realm of celebrities, alias "Lions," I took with me as escort Guy Van Meenen, who is planning to introduce baseball to the French youth.

We first met Milton Katims, famous young conductor of NBC Symphony. I introduced Guy to Mr. Katims as "America's Ambassador of Baseball to France." The "Lion" beamed, and said. "Sure enough, fellow, what a team."

Then the two of them launched into such a chatter about Dodgers and Giants I was hardly able to get Mr. Katims' attention long enough for him to agree that the Atlantic is a Great Symphony.

I really knew very little more to say to him, however, for my musical education got only as far as "The Happy Farmer." And I married him.

Mr. Katims did however reach into his pocket for a piece of paper and wrote out his summer schedule for me. He would be in Paris until June 7, (my birthday, but he was not letting that influence his plans, I was sure.) Then to Prades, France, for the Chamber Music Festival with Pablo Casals until June 30. Make some recordings for Columbia (not Tenn., but records). Then a visit with Toscanini in Italy. Next he would fly from Rome to Israel to guest conduct the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra for four weeks. Then fly back to NBC. He wrote that much for me, then he and the "ambassador" went to bat for the Dodgers again.

The thing that surprised me most about Milton Katims was his extreme youthfulness. I had always thought of orchestra conductors as having long white hair. But not this one. He appears to be several years younger than thirty.

The thing that I liked best about him was the sacred way he mentioned "The Maestro" Toscanini. His enthusiasm over that visit in Italy was the only part of the conversation that exceeded his interest in the Dodgers.

While the menfolks were in their 4th and 5th “inning” of the interview, a young Negro woman, tall and very slender, passed by, turned, came back and asked Milton what she should play for the Ship’s Party. He answered “Oh, something light,” and was back with the Dodgers again. He did, however, introduce her as Lois Towles, Hollywood’s great concert pianist, and Lois and I went into conversation. She used to teach at Fisk University.

If you can imagine a huge ocean liner, nearly 1,000 feet long, or about as long as a city block, I would reckon, stack it up 8 or 10 stories, or decks, high. Fill it with small rooms, large rooms, lounges, offices, porches, cubby holes and corridors; sprinkle it with 468 First Class passengers, 499 Cabin Class passengers, 466 Tourist Class Passengers, 1,080 crew members; all speaking with different languages and accents; paint it white with red chimneys, set it afloat with a rhythmic, rocking motion in a giant tub of glistening blue, sudsy water—you will have a slight idea of what the *Liberté* is like. You will have an idea why, while on board, I would rather ramble than write. So I rambled.

In my ramblings around I met an average-size man, in average size horn-rimmed glasses and a slightly above average sports suit; with an average-size fringe of slightly-graying hair around an average-size balding pate—in other words all about average for a man of about 47 years, more or less, maybe.

His name turned out to be “Jean Desses,” and the ship’s daily newspaper reports him to be a famous French Fashion Designer. When his name is mentioned among fashion-conscious women and girls there are always gasps and symptoms of swooning.

“Ah, Zhawn Day-zay” the French girls say, evidently pronouncing the name. An American girl told me M. Desses is one of the foremost up-and-coming designers of the world right now. Later, glancing through *Vogue*, I suspected they were right. But on the streets of Columbia he would pass for Dave Gordon if Dave had less hair, more years and pounds, and if he would wear average size horn-rims, and over-size sports clothes.

But as you folks in Columbia might guess from what I wear, all I know about Fashion is that it is not spinach, as a not-too-recent book declared it is. We spoke of the work he is doing on board (“because it is so quiet”); of the work he must do in Paris; of going to Deauville for a show on Sunday after arrival, the show he must put on the following week every afternoon at 3 p.m.; and of the big fashion show in Paris August 1-10.

Altogether I gained a very definite impression that this particularly world-famous French Fashion Designer is very much a working man.

I suppose I should have felt a little more self-conscious in my \$11.98 blue-green, mail-order, nylon crepe, size 38, but

glancing at his working clothes, and noticing that they fitted him about like my size 38 fitted me, I didn't feel too badly.

However, I did determine to be in Paris, August 1-10, for the Shows, if possible, especially for "Desses Day," August 4, and if it is at all possible, and if francs and marks are not revalued by then, I might come home in a Desses model, even if I have to live on hard French bread and non-potable European water until then. Meeting an artist like M. Desses does something to even a country woman's sense of Fashion.

As I said "Goodby and thank you very much," to M. Desses, a woman nearby touched my elbow and said unmistakably in English-a-la-Dixie,

"Say, where are you from? I haven't heard so much Southern talk since I left Bristol." And she didn't mean Bristol, England, either. I knew she must have meant the Tennessee side of the Bristol, Tenn.-Va. line.

She is Mrs. Allen Rucher, formerly of Bristol, and now of Lexington, Mass. Her husband is an economist and they are obliged to travel all the time, she said with a world-weary sigh. We had a grand little down-to-earth chat, and agreed that a coonskin cap would look very well hanging on the White House hat rack.

Searching for a map of Paris, in a map rack near the Information Desk, I was aided by John W. Burn, who is taking his young little 81-year-old mother to South France for the next two years, He knows Europe like Dale Younger knows

South Columbia. And he gathered up a book of maps for me and marked enough “must see’s” to keep me in Europe during a 5-year plan. I don’t know what kind of a “lion” he is nor what his work is, but he’d make a wonderful travel agent and publicity representative for the Continent.

THE DAILY HERALD
COLUMBIA, TENNESSEE
SATURDAY, JUNE 21, 1952

Country Woman Cracks NATO

Oh this French Bath Business! Grandma's was never like this!

Whereas, when on Saturday night Grandma thought it necessary for me to take a bath, she dragged the Monday washtub into the kitchen; wedged it behind the stove; filled it with slightly wiggle-tailed rainwater dipped from the barrel under the eaves, and slightly warmed in two tin dishpans on the kitchen stove; gave me half a leg of somebody's last winter's underwear for a washcloth; half a mealsack for a towel, a chunk of potent, brown lye soap; pulled down the shades; turned down the lamp; bade me to remember my neck; and walked out leaving me to lock the door and perform the remainder of the procedure. These French bath stewards do somewhat differently.

The French Bath Business is also very different from what the modern American traveler demands at every motel and hotel—a private bathroom for every person, or at least every couple.

So as far as I could discover, there are only two or three bathrooms or at most four, for the more than 400 people in our section of the ship.

To get a bath here one must make a date with a Continental. In my case he wears a white coat, and answers to the name August—rhymes with disgust—but he is very, very nice indeed. He keeps books on baths; and by making certain gestures and by pointing out the time on my wrist watch, he told me I was to bathe at 7 o'clock Sunday morning, Ship's Time, or about 3 o'clock God's and our time.

So promptly at 7 o'clock Sunday morning, a White Coat filled with a pleurably plump and very polite Frenchman, tapped on our open door, bowed, pointed to me, and announced, "Your bath, Madame."

I scuttled down my nervous little ladder from Bunk D, and sleepily followed him down the 2-foot wide hall to a small room almost completely filled by a huge tub, a huge towel, a small mat and a small cake of soap, merely those and nothing more. He made an all-inclusive gesture, bowed again, walked out, and locked the door from the outside.

I glanced at the tub. It seemed enormous. I tested the water; it seemed just right. So I de-pajamaed myself and stepped in.

If that tub seemed large from the outside, it was a lake when I sat down, or tried to. Before I realized what was happening I was floating around, feet up and head down, and I'd never had more than three distressful swimming lessons in my life!

The tub must have been 7 feet long and I am 5 feet 5¹/₄ inches in my bare feet.

My first thought was of the Life Belt back in 755-D above my bunk! The door was locked and August was evidently far-gone. I clutched, grasped, scratched, and struggled, but there was not so much as a straw to catch at! Even the soap dish was high above.

As I proceeded in my near-drowning process and gobbled down a mouthful of violently salty water, I realized that my Personal and Private Atlantic Pact, to let the Atlantic alone, was being broken. I was absorbing the ocean.

At long last my foot found that the tub had an end in it. I turned around, reached for a faucet, but it turned on the shower. Then the Atlantic not only was coming up on me, it was also coming down on me, and with what force! Suddenly I remembered it was Sunday morning and time, a very good time, for prayer. My first and very fervent prayer that morning was: "Please, God, turn that water off!"

I didn't say "Amen," however, till finally, with main strength and much awkwardness I had wrestled that faucet and the Atlantic back into place and got my feet firmly planted on that small mat! I never did get as far as the soap, so that was saved.

By the time I had blotted a considerable amount of the remaining Atlantic off my person and had climbed into my pajamas, I felt more composed, especially when I found I

could open the door from the inside. So I walked out into the 2-foot wide hall, bowed to my White Coat, and said in my hybrid French, “Merci, Monsieur, bath tres bon.”

I then realized if I had called “Mercy” from the bathroom he would have thought I was saying “Thank You.”

In the tub I had very definite visions of *Herald* and *Democrat* headlines proclaiming, “Country Woman Drowns in French Bath Tub.”

I was so glad not to make those headlines, I bowed again to August and said, “Merci, beaucoup.”

He scraped and bowed and tried to tell me something about the bath being “la mer,” and I remember that “mer” meant sea. I said in French, or English. “Sufficient,” and I meant just that.

Wandering on down the hallway, trying to find 755-D again, I met our French maid. (Oh yes, we have one of those, too.) Trying to explain to her why I was out alone at that hour of the morning, I told her that I’d had a bath. And then I added what I thought was “la Mer,” but she understood me to say “Ma Mere.”

She exclaimed, “Bath, with your mother?”

I exploded: “Oh my goodness, gracious, Miss Agnes, no (though I don’t think Agnes was her name). Bath with Mama! Absolutely not, and Heavenly days! Mama never gave me a bath like that!”

I found some consolation from the Big Swede, the girl who has a bunk on par with mine, 755-C. She explained, “We are not so dirty in Europe as in America. We take not much baths.”

I concluded that if all baths in Europe were like the one I had that morning, I’d go European too!

I learned this, also, on the *Liberté*: When we hunt what we Americans call “the bath room,” we don’t find them so labeled on a French ship. They are evidently called by various names. But they are not too hard to find, for all doors are always open.

I stepped into one that I thought might be a proper place, but upon looking around at the furnishings I concluded that the sign above the door, which I had not noticed, was not “Dames.” So I sneaked quickly out and down the hall to another open door. The word on the door of that one was definitely “Dames.”

It seemingly made no difference, however, for the doors remained open, and the white coated stewards roamed in and out with their care-taking and cleaning, just as freely as the dames did.

Whatever there may be about the French that is false, it is not their modesty.

I realized I was starved. Not so much for food as for a glass of good, cold water. And it kept coming into my mind that European water is not fit to drink. As I pondered this more and more, I grew thirstier and thirstier. That mouthful of the Atlantic I had gulped in my bath didn’t help much.

The waiter asked if I wanted “juice.” I said, “Certainly, and water.” He brought juice, and juice alone. He asked if I wanted coffee. I said, “Certainly, and WATER.” He brought coffee, also alone.

One taste of that thick, black gooey broth convinced me that French coffee might be guaranteed to contain not more than 1/2 of one percent water.

I glanced out the portholes at the waves and grew thirstier. I tried in vain to brush enough dust off my memory of Prof. Morton’s alleged French to remember the word that meant “to drink.” It wasn’t in there.

I glanced out the portholes again and remembered “The Ancient Mariner.”

“Grandma” Mitchell had made us memorize certain portions from that, including, “Water, water, everywhere, but not a drop to drink.”

Certainly, the venerable Ancient Mariner must have been aboard a French boat, and at that on “the morning after.”

Finally, Britain came to my rescue in the form of a couple from London, Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Briggs, who are at my table. He is at the Foreign Desk of the *London Daily Herald*, he said, and he also said that Britain had been blamed many times for aiding the South, in a certain not very recent war, which we called Civil.

He told me the French word for water is “eau.” I was ready and very willing to say “Oh,” all right. So I said to the waiter

very distressfully, "Oh." He replied, "Wee, Madame," and went on his way.

Then Canada helped out. Mrs. Pearson, on my right, from Vancouver, B.C., said, "You must say *L'eau*."

The next time he passed, I said, "*L'eau*," and pointed to the waves outside the porthole. He nodded and said, "Oui, oui, Madame." He seemed pleased that I realized that the sea is *l'eau*.

At last in desperation, I resorted to gestures, and to make them unmistakable, I snatched my empty juice glass, pointed threateningly to the Atlantic at the same time. He said, "Oui, oui," again and disappeared to the rear of the ship.

At last he re-appeared with a bottle about the size of a 4-ounce bud vase, filled with a reasonably clear liquid, and set it before me in disgust. It was my time to exclaim "Oui, oui, oui, and merci, merci."

After breakfast, which the French call "*petit dejeuner*," or "small lunch," I put on my coat, and sunglasses, tied up my poodle (hairdo that is) and found my way out on the deck to confer again with the Atlantic. Having participated of her in The Bath, I felt we were better acquainted.

Up to that time I had met very few of the people on board, and that morning I saw very few of those that I knew. I had understood that besides the crew of 1,080, there were 1,432 passengers aboard. In my arithmetic that meant 2,513 people; and I was sure there must be 2,512 accents, for everybody

there seemed to have an accent except for me. Or perhaps the number should by then be 2, 512 ¹/₂. By Sunday morning I feared that I, too, was coming down with a change of language. So I scarcely dared to speak for fear I would betray it.

I settled down in a deck chair, pulled up my blanket, and all was GLORIOUS! Somebody said that the groves were God's first chapels. I tried to recall my history, and especially the first part of the book of Genesis, but was too languid to separate the land from the water in my remembrance of Creation. However, I believe from the evidence then available that the waves had a slight priority over the groves, adequate though groves are, as chapels.

It was too late by then to go up on the Boat Deck at the very top of the ship to the man-made chapel, and I was too tired for more stairs, so I just sat there wrapped up and blanketed in that deck chair and had a very, very Close Communion.

THE DAILY HERALD
COLUMBIA, TENNESSEE
MONDAY, JUNE 23, 1952

Country Woman Goes Gala but Not Entirely So

BY LERA KNOX

(Still on Atlantic)—

No story of a ship's voyage would be complete, I suppose, without a mention of the Ship's Party, or as we say on the *Liberté*, the "Gala."

It happened on the fourth evening out, and does this ship get around to the Gala in a hurry! We've made such fast time, and the sun has been moving so rapidly, we've had to get up every night at midnight and run our watches up an hour.

Incidentally, I figured that I have been losing an extra hour of sleep every night, which I must be reminded to catch up with on the journey back home.

By the fourth day out everybody already knew everybody else worthwhile, and everybody was in a mood to have a lot of fun.

The gala began with a bigger-than-usual dinner. Only by copying a chef's dictionary could I tell you all the things we had to eat that night. I tried eating some of all of it, for after all

my \$11.98 blue-green nylon dress doesn't fit very well anyway. And by that time I had gained enough confidence in French cuisine to know that whatever it might be called on the menu it would taste good.

Our menus that evening had ribbons on them, red, blue, white, yellow, all inscribed in gold with the word *Liberté*—as though we could ever forget. Following the example of the little grey-haired lady who LOVES everybody, (and kept the people at her table laughing throughout the week), I tied my blue ribbon around my Columbia “poodle hairdo,” and set out to have as good a time as anybody that night.

I couldn't join in the dancing because, after all, Grandpa was a preacher, and it was against family laws for me ever to do anything worse than the Virginia Reel, and that on the sly. I didn't taste the champagne, because the ship would soon be docking and I wouldn't have the sea to use as an excuse for my staggering. But I could listen to the corks pop, and I could enjoy watching the different international games and dances and hold my sides laughing at my fellow passengers who entered the contests.

First came the Snowball Dance. I thought at first when that was announced that it might be somewhat chilly. But no, it was designed to melt whatever “ice” there might still be on board, except of course that downstairs in the refrigerators.

A volunteer couple went out on the floor, and started dancing. When the music stopped they separated and each chose a new

partner, thus two made four. The music stopped again suddenly, and 4 made 8. The process was repeated until the floor was full and everybody was stepping on everybody else's corns and laughing about it.

A lull, then the Rubber Ball Dance. Every couple was given a small rubber ball to place between their foreheads; then they put their hands behind their backs and the game was to keep that ball in place, to dance to any kind of music, keep hands behind them, and never to drop the ball. Well, those balls had a way of getting around, as you can imagine. Sometimes one would find itself between the lady's eye and the gentleman's ear; sometimes it was nose to nose, cheek to cheek, or chin to chin, but it was all ridiculously funny. Each couple who lost out left the floor. And to show you what smooth dancers they were, two couples tied for the prize, though many of those dancers are probably still rubbing their eyes, ears, or noses.

Next game was the Statue Dance. The floor was filled with couples, and the contest was to remain in whatever position one found oneself when the music stopped, and to remain absolutely motionless, as still as Miss Liberty, without even a bat of the eye nor a giggle, until the music began again. Sometimes I was sure those poor ludicrous statues must have thought that the orchestra had gone to sleep.

I heard one man say that as long as he could be caught looking at the floor or the ceiling he got along very well, but when his eyes fell on a fellow fool he went down and back to the chairs.

It was in the Statue Dance that my cabin-mate Brigitta, the Big Swede, stole the show, alternately swinging the big Texans, Tom and Steve. But it was in a one-foot dance when she was left on one toe with one finger pointing skyward, Tom looked at her, giggled, and had to sit down, leaving her unsupported on one toe, that “Sweden” also fell. I tried to console her by saying that I didn’t believe even Miss Liberty could have stood during all these years on one toe.

By that time my watch said midnight. And I realized it was time to run it up another hour. When I looked at it again it was already after one. Realizing that a respectable country woman ought not to be up and at a dance after 1:00 a.m., remembering the five hours sleep that “Longitude and Latitude” had already deprived me of, I gave my seat of vantage to the Little Lady who Loves Everybody, and went downstairs to Bunk 755-D.

By doing so, I learned next morning that I had missed the Purser’s last party, as I had previously missed his first. After I was gone they brought out bells, whistles, caps, ribbons, all sorts of crazy, kid-like playthings, had more marches, games, contests—good clean fun and hilarious laughter—but I slept right along through all of it. Guess I’m slipping. It must be that birthday coming up.

I believe I felt better next morning than the 70-odd-year-old Little Lady who Loves Everybody. She stayed up with the other young people all night, but she brought her usual smile to breakfast, as did they.

THE DAILY HERALD
COLUMBIA, TENNESSEE
TUESDAY, JUNE 24, 1952

Country Woman Tends Tender

BY LERA KNOX

About To Leave the Atlantic—

On what was to be our last night at sea, having caught up with longitude and latitude, we didn't have to run our watches back an hour at midnight, so I expected to have a good night's sleep. Perhaps I did. But sometime, it seemed very shortly after I had gone to bed, I waked with a start; didn't know where I was; all was quiet; ship wasn't rocking, engines weren't chugging. I lost no time in scuttling down my nervous little ladder and tip-toeing into the hall. Imagine my surprise to see green!

Actually it was a sort of a flat green hill with some Japanese-looking little green trees along the top. I still felt "all at sea," and finding that little green hill in what I thought should still be the middle of the ocean gave me a start. Then I realized what had happened. We had docked in the harbor of Plymouth to "expel the British," at least those on board the ship.

I realized from what I had read about sailors that I should have shouted: "Ah, Land, at last!" But I had been having such

a wonderful time on the ocean, I really didn't want to see land yet. If liners get to be much faster than the *Liberté* I think we should annex the Pacific to the Atlantic and cross both of them to get to Europe—the Atlantic will probably be wide enough, though, when I return to the States in September. And Miss Liberty may look as good to me as the *Liberté* did the day I left.

But remembering my duties toward expelling the British, I reached for a coat and sweater, put them on over housecoat and pajamas, and started for the dining room. All the people from my table were getting off at Plymouth, and Texas was seceding, too.

Most of the “expellees” were already at the tables with their hats on, pocketbooks well in hand and cameras swung over their shoulders. They were surprised to see me in coat and pajamas, and scarf around my bobby pins.

“Did you decide to see London this morning?” They asked.

“No, but did you all h'expect me to jolly well let youse bloody h'Englishmen get off this yere boat, taking my 'eart and all my 'aitches, and not let me know anything about it, did ye?”

So we broke our French rolls together, spread them with Normandy butter and Italian marmalade (by then I was able to call it “Marm-a-lardy”). And that morning I got a bottle of water without begging. That was the morning for the weekly tips.

Emily and Leonard Briggs had their last two eggs for breakfast. They said that after that morning they would have no butter and only one egg per week per person. It was worth the trip to see how they enjoyed butter and eggs. Leonard popped some more of his h'English jokes on us—I had always heard that the British have no sense of humor! His yarns beat anything we hear at home on television or radio.

Joy Pearson, from Canada, who had not seen her brother in England for 42 years, was thinning her French coffee with tears of happiness. She was taking her brother a ham that she had bought in New York. And she said:

“When he asks me what he can do for me, I shall say, ‘Please, a pot of tea!’”

As a farewell gift Emily gave me her recipe for genuine Yorkshire Cheese Cake and Leonard told me his best joke on Churchill (I can't tell you that 'til I get back home, not that it is unprintable, but because it must be accompanied by an accent that can't be spelled.)

After breakfast we all went upstairs to First Class Lounge where they had to show passports and go through the red tape of dis-embarking. I watched them carefully so I would know how to behave when we arrived at Le Havre late that same afternoon.

Going out on deck I caught my first sight of the Union Jack in his (or her) own environment. It was flying from the top of “Sir Walter Raleigh,” the little boat, or tender as they called it,

which had come out to take passengers and baggage off the *Liberté*. The big ship could not get close to land in the Plymouth Harbor.

Then it all came over me. This was really PLYMOUTH, the very same harbor from which the MAYFLOWER sailed!

I THINK I HAVE NEVER LOVED AMERICA SO MUCH AS WHEN WE SAT AT ANCHOR IN THAT LITTLE HARBOR OF PLYMOUTH!

Looking back over our long, but seemingly short, journey across the Atlantic, and realizing the bravery of that little band of Pilgrims, I wanted to get down on my knees on any rock that might be on that rugged little shore, and say the biggest prayer of my whole life.

I didn't feel like this even when I stood in the top of the Empire State Building and looked into the diamond that is New York. In an instant I re-traveled my entire trip, back in the plane over New York and Washington, the hills of Virginia, the haze of the Smokies, the dams and lakes and roads and farms and homes of Tennessee, and back in our old Plymouth car around the detour road to Match, and Rally Hill, and to Knoxdale—it was a long way from our rattley old 1939 Plymouth car to this green bordered Plymouth Harbor. And the *Mayflower* was not like the *Liberté*. If it had not been for the extreme bravery of that venturing little group of Pilgrims, America might never have been ours. I celebrated my most

Memorable Thanksgiving Day on Memorial Day, May 30, 1952
at 4:00 a.m., ship's time.

Downstairs again, I took out my bobby pins and put on my hat. Maybe the Atlantic was wide enough after all. And I decided that I would not ask Congress to move the Pacific over to our East Coast so as to make ocean trips to Europe last longer.

We didn't get off the *Liberté*, until 6:00 p.m. that afternoon, but I kept my hat on all day.

THE DAILY HERALD
COLUMBIA, TENNESSEE
TUESDAY, JULY 1, 1952

Country Woman at the Rail

It takes a long time to get off a boat
even after ocean crossed

BY LERA KNOX

Somewhere in Europe—

I had a long, long look at France before I ever set foot on her soil, or rather platform. That morning when the *Liberté* stopped at Plymouth to disembark the British, Canadian, and London-bound passengers, I got out of my bunk, hurriedly and partially dressed, even to putting on my hat rather than comb my hair, and went down to have breakfast with some very excellent journalistic souls from London whom I had met on board.

By the time I had reached the table my “habille” was about to become “dishabille”—in other words I was about to lose part of my hurriedly-put-on clothes. I tried to negotiate a loan from the British, but they had nothing to lend, not even a safety pin, but Canada came to the rescue of my decency and produced an almost blanket-pin from the depths of her handy bag.

After the green shores of Plymouth left us we chugged on toward Le Havre, and were due to land there sometime the same day, or so I could understand from the all-French-speaking crew and mostly-French passengers. But I got a shock while gouging my small silver spoon into my thick black after-luncheon coffee; I began to see derricks and wharves or platforms and a general conglomeration of nailed-up boards fly past our portholes.

“What is that?” I gestured to the waiter.

“Le Havre” was the answer.

I couldn't believe it. I jumped up, clamped my beret down closer on my still unbrushed “poodle,” grabbed up my 10-quart shoulder bag, and rushed down to 755-D to gather up my other 3 1/2 bags. Ro-bear (Robert), my guiding and guardian angel of a cabin steward, tried to stop my on-rush, but to no avail. I thought he had enjoyed my company and generous (?) tips so much he wanted me to stay on and return to the States with the ship next trip, but I was not to be deterred. I had sighted land. Or at least lumber.

He finally prevailed on me to leave my heavy luggage saying the French porter would take those up for me, or something like that, but I snatched up my typewriter and handbag and proceeded to climb stairs. That baggage and my late luncheon were almost too much for four or five flights of steps, but I knew that land must be somewhere in the offing, or to starboard or port.

I didn't dare leave that typewriter to the integrity of whatever French dock porter might appear, although I knew by experience it could hardly write English, much less French. And I took consolation in the thought that whatever Mademoiselle might wear my probably pilfered homemade nylon frock to a French Fashion Show would not likely be a sensation, or would she?

I got on deck by the time the tugs were nuzzling the *Liberté* up to the boards. A big derrick picked up a gangplank, all banistered and covered, and long as a Pullman car, and aimed it right at my face. I found I was leaning against the part of the railing that was to come down to make an opening for said gangplank. I moved.

Then instead of people getting off the boat, people began to get on. First policemen, or at least uniforms, of all sorts and varieties. Then the crew—or what I judged to be the crew: men who looked as though they had hurriedly thrown off white coats and half-way jumped into grays and browns—began making 2 to 4 steps at a time down the plank toward the girls they must have in every port. But we poor passengers, who had come all the way across the ocean to get off at Le Havre, were held back by important looking uniforms.

You couldn't tell those uniforms a thing, however, unless you could speak French, and you couldn't ask them anything, for the same reason. You could only look and wait, and drool,

and you can do that as well in English as you could in French, I found out.

I did a lot of looking, and not a little drooling; perhaps, after all, the United States Army decided to answer my prayer, that Stan might be allowed leave to meet the boat; or else that Meg might have obtained reservations and come on down to Havre to escort me onto the Continent. As bad as I wanted to get off that ship, which I loved so much, I hated to attack Europe alone with only a grin for defense, a few travelers' checks for food and transportation, and my only "arms" full of luggage.

I scanned the docks, piers, platforms intently for the sight of a neat, well-dressed young woman or an American Army captain's two shoulder bars. The only women I saw were old or fat or frowsy, and most of the army uniforms were French or at least frowsy. Then I remembered that Meg was at least older than when I saw her, and she had admitted that she was getting fat—but frowsy! Never! Wherever that girl might be I knew she'd be looking good, very good!, and Stan also.

That was about 2 o'clock Friday afternoon. At 6:30 that evening I was still at that railing, leaning on or off, looking and watching. I'd change bifocals every once in a while, but I couldn't see any more familiar faces with one pair than I could with the other. The same factory must have made both pairs of my glasses.

In my “off” sessions from the railing I’d trot downstairs to see if my suitcases had been picked up by the French porters. They were still resting placidly in their same piled-up positions.

“Ro-bear” tried each time to calm my nerves and lower my blood pressure, with the most pacifying of gestures, but I answered with gestures that meant “dead or alive I am determined to get off this boat.”

Meanwhile the public address system was talking, but in French. People were milling around, and there was nothing for me to do but mill around too. Now and then a name would be called on the P.A. But not mine. Or was it? How would the French say “Lera Knox?”

Up to that time I had never heard a Frenchman call me anything but “Ma-dam” (accent on last syllable.) They didn’t say “My-dame.”

At last I detected in the P.A. intonations the word that sounded like “theater”—I realized that I might be making a show of myself, but so was every other impatient aboard. Then a word that sounded like “sin-e-emoah.” Putting it all together I recalled that the words “cinema” and “theater” were on the door of a big room upstairs, and I observed that the French-understanding “impatiens” were rushing upstairs. I did also. We took seats in the large room. But we were not in the mood for a movie—moving was what we were interested in. At least I could speak for myself.

One by one we were called out of our seats to line up and pass along an extended line of uniforms who wanted to see our passports, know how many cigarettes we had, how much money, and a lot of personal questions that were not listed in passports or who's who. We were checked to see whether we had tickets for the boat train, reservations on said train, red landing cards without which no one could leave the ship. Then I had to spend \$30 good American dollars for a handful of stuff that looked like Grandpa's Confederate money, only bigger, and perhaps more valueless. Because, we were told, we were facing a 3-day bank holiday, and those francs would be handy in Paris. All of which was right, I guess. That many Frenchmen in uniform couldn't be all wrong.

Back to cabin again we were told to go, and to tell cabin stewards to release our baggage to French dock porters.

"Ro-bear" gave me an I-told-you-so grin. I admitted he was right. I might just as well have spent those four or more hours getting my money's worth out of a nap in berth 755-D.

But I was at least ready when the time came to get off, and I changed his grin to one of the "merci" kind with another American dollar for a tip for his trip which I didn't take. Shook hands with him and said "revoir" for the sixth time and climbed the stairs again behind a rough, but capable looking, perspiring and heavily laden French Dock porter.

THE DAILY HERALD
COLUMBIA, TENNESSEE
THURSDAY, JULY 3, 1952

“Country Woman” Writes Of Danes—And Of Maurians

Editor’s Note: Today’s communication from Mrs. Lera Knox, the *Daily Herald’s* “Country Woman” correspondent who is now touring Europe, is what was written as simply a friendly personal letter to the editor. But it contained so much news in it that (with some deletions) we are publishing it as part of the series.

**Tom Brown, Lera Knox, and
Bill Stanfill near entrance to
Hamlet’s Castle, at Elsinore,
Denmark.**



Back in Büdingen,
Oberhasse, Germany
11 a.m. Monday
June 23, 1952

Dear John:

As you can see above, we are back “home” again—but what you can’t see is that we have had a most wonderful-trip-wish-you-were-here visit to Denmark.

Gosh! I LOVE THAT DENMARK! If Switzerland is more perfect, as I've been told, I doubt if I can take it—for a while at least. And it will be a little while, perhaps July 1 or perhaps a little later.

Even though it is somewhat chilly here—I'm never out of my sweater except to get into "longies"—and a coat feels good anytime, I don't care to rush into the "warmth" that is Berlin unless urged by someone other than myself. I'd rather send home for my winter coat—which I need more right now than the moths do.

If you don't believe that Tennesseans can make themselves known in far places, you should have had the experience that I had while standing in the Knight's Hall of Frederiksborg Castle, near Hillerod, Denmark, gazing innocently up at a magnificent tapestry.

Stan and Meg and I had ventured to take what is known as the North SeaLand Tour of a group of personally conducted tours over the island on which Copenhagen is located.

In order to get a seat on the bus I showed the guide a letter from the *Herald and Democrat*, which confessed that I am an accredited representative. After noticing the *Herald's* letterhead, he politely exclaimed, "Oh, I know that paper: I've been in New York!"

I tried to explain that it was not the *Herald-Tribune*, but the *Herald and Democrat* of Columbia, Tennessee. But when he got on the bus he announced, "We have with us today a

representative of one of the two largest newspapers in the United States!”

I looked around to see who that press-personality was, and found him smiling down on me. I could only shrink down in my coat collar. No time for explaining; the bus had started.

A while later we were standing, as I said, under a very important tapestry with the busload of other sightseers when Stan leaned over to me and said in a stage whisper, “That’s a long way from Columbia, Tennessee, isn’t it?”

I looked up and retaliated, “Yes, and from Dover, Tennessee, too, suh!” We have our little battles about our hometowns.

Just then I notice I was about to be surrounded by olive drab. In addition to Stan’s uniform in front of me, I was being flanked by two uniforms of the same color. A soft voice on my right said, “Pardon me, but what newspaper are you writing for?”

“Why, the *Herald and Democrat* from Columbia, Tennessee—I kept trying to tell the guide—”

Then the voice said, “Well, I’m from Columbia, too.”

And the Left Flank exclaimed, “And I’m from Columbia, too, and Hohenwald!”

It was Billy Stanfill from Thomas Avenue, South Columbia, grandson of the late Squire Drake Stanfill, and Tom Brown, reared in Hohenwald, but who worked for the telephone company in Columbia.

They said they thought they recognized me when I got on the bus in Copenhagen, from the clipping Billy's mother had sent him, but when the guide introduced me as a representative of one of the two largest newspapers in the United States, they didn't recognize the *Herald and Democrat*.

It was when they heard Stan joshing me about the tapestries and castles, about those not being in Columbia, Tennessee, that they began to be suspicious. And when I opened my mouth to speak, they knew I couldn't be from anywhere else than Dixie! We almost had a camp meeting right there in that sacred and historic hall.

So when we made an onslaught on Kronborg Castle, the Elsinore Castle of Shakespeare's Hamlet, a few miles farther along on the tour, I had an army escort that any woman would be proud of, and when we all tackled a marvelous Danish dinner at a little special and unspoiled restaurant in Copenhagen that the guide told us about, I had really good company. And when we three, aided and abetted by Meg and Stan, took in the whole Tivoli Amusement Park that night, you never saw five happier travelers.

And we all agreed not to tell on one another, but we couldn't resist sending a round-robin card from Hamlet's Castle to a teacher who had been Margaret's, Jack's, and Billy's English teacher. Guess she was a bit puzzled, and a bit surprised, but certainly no more so than we were—the funny thing of it all is that they are buddies of Tilman Knox. Tilman is my

husband Alex's nephew, who had intended to be with them on the trip, but had his leave cancelled at the last minute.

And we talked about just about everybody else in Columbia and Hohenwald, in the army and out. We discussed Billy Corrigan and the name he made for himself introducing hillbilly music to Europe (may he be forgiven) through his famous Uncle Willie Gasthaus' radio programs, and just about as many other home folks as the hours and the dinner would permit.

I don't think, now that it is over, that they would object to my telling you the things on our menu that night, so you'll know why we had to take a long, long walk in Tivoli afterwards.

The dinner started with half a fresh boiled lobster each, with other appetizers of smoked herring, pickled herring, smoked eel, pickled eel, and fried eel, shrimp, salmon, plaice, cod, and other fish delicacies, delicious bacon, ham, pork, eggs, all served on those wonderful and famous Danish open-faced sandwiches called "smorgasbord" (pronounced something like smeared bread—but wonderfully smeared that bread was.) Then we had several delicious salads—those were only the introductions to the meal.

Following were hot roast beef, potatoes, cauliflower, and other vegetables, more delicious delicacies. Cheeses of various kinds, fruits, and a dessert of pancakes, ice-cream, and other sweets, and the total cost of our dinners was \$1.45 each. I

haven't seen or tasted such a meal since I used to go with Grandpa Ussery to preaching out in the country and went home with a church member for dinner.

We "skålléd" or toasted in proper Danish fashion, and had one grand and glorious time. But we all walked straight through Tivoli Gardens until it was time for us to remember that tomorrow would be another day, and that the boys had to leave for camp early on that other day, tomorrow.

The morning *Stars and Stripes* carried a story about Tilman that explained the cancellation of his leave. He seems to be doing right by golf over here, and these people do love their golf. I'm mighty proud to be his kinfolks, from what I hear.

FROM STARS AND STRIPES:

"Garmisch, June 21 (Special)—Medalist Tilman Knox, ex-Tennessee pro from the 43rd Div., came from behind in the driving rain yesterday to capture five of the last six holes and defeat Murray Jacobs, VII Corps 2-up for the 7th Army golf championship.

Knox, five down with six to go played in the 36-hole final match, turned on a blazing finish to take five of the last six holes. Jacobs had held a 3-up at the mid-way point and 3-up again after 27 holes.

After halving the 28th, 29th, and 30th holes, Knox turned on the steam across the waterlogged greens for top honors."

THE DAILY HERALD
COLUMBIA, TENNESSEE
MONDAY, JULY 7, 1952

Country Woman Visits Denmark

BY LERA KNOX

No, I didn't shake hands with King Frederik nor Queen Ingrid, but I did have a chat with two of their Royal Life Guards, they of the Sam Brown belts and Bear Skin Hats. Though the fact that the Guards spoke Danish and I spoke English made our conversation more of a chatter than a chat.

I didn't parade Tivoli with their Majesties the three little princesses, but I did live almost next door to the private school which they attend.

I didn't have tea at the American Embassy, though I met some American soldiers who did.

Indeed, I doubt if Royalty, Parliament, or the Embassy even knew I was in town. The dressed-up policemen probably kept an eye on me, but they have very nice eyes, so I wasn't too nervous about them.

I don't know just when we decided it, but somehow after a day and a half in Denmark, Meg, Stan, and I just didn't mention going on to Norway and Sweden at all. We seemed to reach a

sort of silent and unanimous opinion that Denmark was just as close to paradise as we could hope to get in ten days, and that ten days was all too short a time to spend there.

On the first day, Stan and I trailed Meg down a main street to what she designated as “three little rooms of my own private heaven, namely, Georg Jensen Silver Shops, Bing and Grondahl’s National China Factory, and The Royal Copenhagen Porcelain Manufactory.” Stan and I enjoyed these, but we didn’t “Oh and Ah” and sigh so deeply and all but fall down and worship there in just the way Meg did.

And Meg and I dutifully (?) followed Stan to the best eating places in town, and to the snazziest night clubs and all those places where a man is advised by guide books either to take, or not to take, his wife—and mother-in-law.

They patiently toured bookshops, parks, museums, gardens, and such with me at times. But for the most part we agreed that to see the city most satisfactorily, “he travels fastest who travels alone.”

Thus it was that instead of having a late hotel breakfast with them, I usually got up early, went down the street, and slipped into the little Kaffee Salon, almost next door to the city’s large fruit, flower, and vegetable market, where farmers and hucksters ate.

There I mostly looked and listened and tried to be as much of a Dane as possible. In ordering breakfast, I didn’t even open my mouth, for fear an accent might slip out. I just pointed,

or nodded, as nonchalantly and inconspicuously as possible toward the cups and coffee urn, and held a finger over the particular pastry that looked the best. I then counted out my ores and took my food to one of the small inconspicuous tables.

To be sure the paintings on the wall of this little place, those of plows, the sunrise, the green houses, the flowers, fruits, and vegetables, were somewhat faded and stained. The air was thick from pipes, cigars, and cigarets, and humanity; the conversation was completely Danish; but the atmosphere was cordial and the coffee and cakes were good.

In order to stay a little longer, I usually went back for a second cup of coffee, which I really didn't need or want. But it was a good excuse. I even picked up a Danish newspaper and tried to read it—so I wouldn't appear too foreign.

I was very much pleased to be merging into Denmark's rural populace the way I was, when a very well-dressed young man stopped at my table and said as correctly as a Vanderbilt professor might:

“Pardon me, but the lady at the counter tells me you are an American. Can I be of any help to you while you are in our city?”

“Indeed you can,” I exclaimed. “This headline says something about Truman. What has he done now?”

“Oh, that's the Steel Strike,” was the answer.

One just cannot escape news.

THE DAILY HERALD
COLUMBIA, TENNESSEE
WEDNESDAY, JULY 9, 1952

Country Woman Finds Nothing Rotten In Denmark

BY LERA KNOX

Why, oh why hasn't somebody told us more about these interesting people and their beautiful country—the Danes and Denmark?

To be sure we have heard about “the melancholy Dane,” Hamlet; and we learned in geography that Demark is a small peninsula with perhaps a few islands thrown in for good measure; and we found that Copenhagen is a hard word to say and a harder one to remember—but in my opinion, all that stuff should be put into a museum and labeled, “World’s Prize Understatement!”

As for being melancholy, there seems to be little of such nonsense as melancholia in this country. On the contrary, I believe the Danes could out-wit the Irish, and a few other funny countries thrown in, with both hands tied behind them, and tongue in cheek. If the Irish, as the Irish say, are 98% wit, then the Danish temperament seems 99 and ⁴⁴/100%

pure, clean humor and fun. I'd like to see the Irish and the Danes meet in a verbal battle. That would be an "Olympics" for the gods!

My first contact with a Danish person was meeting a sturdy little Dane on the train. He broke into our conversation with a clever quip expressed in excellent English, and assured our wondering minds that, "if a Dane gets angry with you, he won't fight today; he'll wait 'til tomorrow." I felt reassured, for I thought that by tomorrow we could either be in Sweden or in Norway.

Incidentally, this man is a professional wrestler. A picture from his billfold showed us that he has won enough medals to cover his very broad chest. So I judged that if this particular Dane didn't fight you today it wouldn't be because he was afraid or didn't know how. He just figured that if he'd wait 'til tomorrow maybe he wouldn't have to fight. Which seems a very sensible peace-plan for men and nations.

As for there being "something rotten in Denmark"—that is pure bosh! That first word in that phrase should be "nothing," and I do mean NOTHING!

The country is as clean as a well-scoured bowl of its own porcelain dinnerware. And that word CLEAN refers to the houses, the barns, the streets, the stores, even the fish market where the old women sit near the sides of the canal and peddle their fish. It refers also, I believe, to the minds of the people. I doubt if there is even one dirty joke or dirty fly on the

peninsula or on any of the islands. I didn't see even one little nasty gnat flying around the lights above the neat sidewalk cafes.

There's nothing "buggy" about Denmark either.

I asked someone if the country has no insects at all. I thought maybe it is just naturally that lucky. The answer was, "That DDT is effective."

Evidentially it is applied, too.

Standing on the street corner, my first morning in Copenhagen, waiting for an endless stream of bicycles to pass, I thought I had never seen such a friendly mass of people in all my life—not even in Sulfur Springs, Texas; and not even in Columbia, Tennessee, on Mule Day. Every cyclist that passed me waved his hand.

By the time I could get my left hand out of my coat pocket and my right hand unloaded enough to wave back, I realized that actually they were signaling for a right turn.

Turning right around the corner, I found myself walking into a beauty-lovers' Special Annex to Heaven.

It was, I judged, Copenhagen's market for her country neighbors. And Rural Denmark had turned out heavily laden, and in an extremely good humor.

If you could imagine the two blocks in your downtown all leveled off, enlarged, and neatly paved with cobblestones, then jam-packed with folks, flowers and fruits, and vegetables of seed-catalog quality leaving just room between each row of

carts, trucks and wagons for a pedestrian or bicyclist to pass. Then let it overflow, this beauty and abundance that I am talking about, you can get some idea of the size of one of Copenhagen's farmers' markets.

To be perfectly accurate, and to put on the record a small part of what I walked through, I took out my little black book and jotted down notes as follows:

A lady crossing the street to board a tram with a large basket of flowers and a loaf of bread. A small pushcart attached to the rear of a bicycle piled high with cauliflower, onions, beets, carrots, and trillium—just like the trillium that grows wild in our woods back home. Next cart packed with daisies done up in florist paper, and bunches of oak leaves and elm branches. A woman with vines growing in little pots, also pots of begonias, geraniums, and fuchsias; and bunches of radishes, herbs, salsify, pink daisies, fern leaves, and sweet Williams just at the opening bud stage. A large truck piled high with rhubarb, stacked like stovewood, and half a dozen boxes of new potatoes on the rear, and a great lot of long green things that must be zucchini or cucumbers.

Parked wisely in the shade of the big truck was a sort of wheelbarrow affair, also powered by a bicycle, loaded to the brim with attractive packages of peony buds, Queen Ann's lace, orange-colored lily buds and blooms; nasturtium; lupines in a half-a-dozen colors; ragged robins, also in bunches; pink carnations, rosebuds in lilac paper; strawberries half as big as

hens' eggs; gooseberries as big as green gage plums; rosebushes with roots wrapped; rubber plants in pots; pink geraniums; and cineraria, wrapped and in pots.

The lady in charge of those had confidently hung her pocket book on the rear of the truck and was rapidly transferring the contents of the wheelbarrow-arrangement to her pocket book in the form of *kroner* and *ores*. A *kroner*, by the way, is the Danish dollar, except that at the present rate of currency exchange, a *kroner* is worth about 14 1/2 cents of our money, and an *ore* is 1/100 part of a *kroner*.

In a little Kaffee Salon, handy for the hucksters, one could buy a cup of very good coffee for 30 ore, and a hunk of delicious bread or pastry for 35 ore. I was tempted to have lunch there.

But curiosity kept me moving on to assemblies of more pink rosebuds in purple paper; water-lily buds in bunches; limbs of trees and climbing rosebushes in bloom, all parked in buckets of water, to keep them fresh. Another seller had mixed bouquets from gardens and woods; celery and tomato plants; mustard for boiling; mushrooms in baskets, herbs in pots; fennel, leeks, chives and cherries, columbines; asparagus; peas; small potatoes; rhubarb; and spinach. Cabbage heads and lettuce were in abundance, and cauliflower heads, which themselves looked like bouquets of white hydrangeas, were packed in bushel baskets.

And purchasers were there in great numbers. I soon noticed that the wholesale buyers were usually dressed in long white

coats or aprons, and most of the sellers wore long tan coats like dusters, or raincoats, or trench coats. Everybody seemed to trust everybody else for pocket books were left lying around as carelessly as were the potatoes.

As to the vehicles on which the produce was loaded, there were, as I mentioned, bicycles with baskets either fore or aft; carts attached by bicycles either fore or aft; old Reo trucks, ancient Packard cars; A-model Fords; new Chevrolets; home-made wagons with horses eating out of nosebags; shiny new English limousines; and believe it or not, even a few ox carts drawn by milch cows. Denmark certainly has a variety of transportation as well as produce.

And the Danes are wise to believe, it seems, that “when the farmer has money, everybody has money.” And the farmers were really taking in money that morning.

I learned that every Sunday, the market is just as full as on that first morning I saw it. And also in other parts of the city the same performance, or a similar one, is repeated. Down in the older part of town by the canal, not far from the King’s residence, is another market where the boats from the neighboring islands come up the middle of the shopping street loaded with vegetables, flowers, fruit, cheese, fish, and all sorts of country produce. This also is a busy section.

And down next to the Parliament building is another canal that is essentially the town’s fish market. There, in the shadow of a monument of an old fisherwoman, surmounted by gulls,

is a long line of bonneted old ladies peddling their fish alive from their perforated bottom boats. They'll skin or dress their produce while you wait: eels, shrimp, fish, lobsters just any live thing that comes out of the water. You pay your ores and take your choice.

I know you think this is all a sort of fantastic fairy-tale dream. But not so. It all happens everyday but Sunday. And on Monday and Friday and Saturday, the markets are twice as busy.

But by 10:00 a.m. every morning the flower and vegetable markets are as clean as your kitchen table, or as clean as it ought to be. And at 2:00 p.m. the whole fish market space, even the old statue, is all washed up by the city fire hose and the gulls go elsewhere.

Certainly, there's not so much as a rotten temper in Denmark, and I can tell you there are no flies on this countryside, with or without DDT.

THE DAILY HERALD
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THURSDAY
JULY 10, 1952

Country Woman Abroad—Meets a Great Dane

BY LERA KNOX

I may as well admit that I am incurably a book-drunkard, and can no more pass a bookstore than an alcoholic can pass a bar—unless on a non-stop express. And there are few non-stop expresses in Copenhagen. Besides, I had read in my “how not to get fat” book that one must walk half a mile for each half a pat of butter. And that Danish butter is very good indeed, so I was doing a lot of walking, and consequently a lot of stopping at bookstores. The fact that most of the books in most of the stores were in Danish made little difference. I could at least look at the pictures. Cartoons are the same in any language, if there are no words connected with them.

Wandering around trying to find the Town Hall Square, I discovered a little shop that had in the window several books with English titles. I went in, picked up the nearest, and looked it over. The title was *Meet the Danes*, and the price was K4:85. Gosh, what an awful nice little book. Then I realized that K meant kroner, which was about 14 1/2 cents in our money, and

the 85 would be ore, so the total price would be bout 69 cents (not plus tax) which would be about what a big lunch with dessert and drink might cost. I wasn't hungry, and did want to "Meet the Danes," so I counted out kroner and ores, took the little book, walked out and sat down on a handy park bench.

That's one thing I like about Copenhagen. Park benches are always handy. I decided to read my lunch hour out. But I had no sooner scanned the first couple of pages until I found myself rushing back to Mr. Kai Worm the "Boghandel" as the sign above the door said, and asking the young man,

"Do you speak English?" "Certainly," was the surprising answer.

"Then tell me how I can find the publisher of this book. He seems to be here in Copenhagen. Please."

Smiling, he picked up the telephone, spoke a word, dialed a number, jabbered a few words, smiled again, wrote something on a slip of paper, and said: "The editor will be glad to see you, at this address." I looked up the street on my map, and decided to walk it—I might find another bookshop on the way. I forgot entirely about lunch. But every now and then I'd sit on a park bench and read a little more from the little book. The man who wrote that book was saying just exactly what I wanted to say about Danes, but I couldn't find such words as he put together, in the way he put them together, in any other book, magazine, or newspaper I had ever seen.

Following Bregade, which is Danish for Broad Street, I came directly to Amalienborg, the Palace of King Frederick!

Certainly the King didn't have anything to do with that book! Was I lost again? I looked at the slip of paper, and at my map. The slip read "21 Ameliegade." I was just a little mixed in my spelling. The correct address must be nearby, for the street sign said "Ameliegade." I dodged around the castle, and found No. 22.

On the opposite side of the street where No. 21 should be was only a tall and completely blank wall. I reasoned that it must be the side wall or back of the castle.

Now Danish policemen are so dressed up in blue uniforms and brass buttons, they look like they might be Admirals of the King's Navy. But they really aren't. One gets the impression that the city government had found on sale somewhere some handsomely tailored uniforms, and had had some men tailor-made to fit the uniforms. But the reverse is probably true. I could not help thinking that in Denmark policemen could be only ornamental, and were not intended to be useful. Once I asked a policeman about a location of somewhere, and he had to ask a taxi driver.

But up against this blank wall I had to ask somebody. I saw a policeman, and looked about for a taxi driver. There was not a taxi in sight, so I ventured to show my slip of paper to the officer. He smiled, and pointed at the blank wall where I thought No. 21 should be. I must have looked as blank as the wall.

He smiled, and pointed to a small door in another wall down the street a little way. Danes must have their little jokes, even in numbering houses, I thought.

I walked across the street and down to the door in the next blank wall. I knocked, properly I thought. But no answer. There must be someone at home, for “the Editor” was expecting me, Mr. Worm had said. I ventured to open the door, heavy though it was, wondering if the policeman was watching me.

No wonder no one answered. The door led to a sort of wide long hall like a porte-cochere, and beyond this was a sort of court yard, paved with cobbles that were very well worn. Kilroy or perhaps a lot of Kilroys, must have been there before. A sign on the wall said 1751.

I looked around, and closely. The one sign on the one door that I could find suggested that I was in the Italian Embassy; I turned hurriedly and scooted out to the sidewalk again, and closed the door softly.

I looked about again for the policeman, but cop, cycle, and all were gone. I scratched my tam, and made bold again. Well, nobody had told me to get out, and I could speak Italian as well as I could Danish. On the next “tour” I passed the Embassy door, and found another courtyard, then another open hallway, and another door. This one luckily had several names on it, and at the bottom was one that looked like the name in the front of the little book, “Hans Reitzels, Forlag,” and “Forlag,” according to my little pocket dictionary, means “publisher.”

I pushed the door open ever so gently, found another hallway, some stairs. I tripped up those very easily, not knowing but that the next door might be the Russian Embassy—and I don't speak Russian so well, either. On the second flight, however, I found the same title, "Hans Reitzels, Forlag."

I tapped lightly, but before the door could be opened, I bravely pushed it open and said to the girl at the desk, "Do you speak English?"

To my surprise she exclaimed, "I certainly do, and it's so good to hear a Southern accent! You must be Mrs. Knox." She's from Florida.

It is really good to be recognized by a Southerner in a Danish publisher's office, upstairs next door to the Italian Embassy, and second door from the King's castle. I keep on liking Denmark.

I explained to her that I had found the little book, liked it very much, and would like to quote some of the things "Bo Bojesen," the author, had said about the Danes.

She introduced a portly gentleman from the next room and he very graciously told me it is proper anywhere in the world to quote, if you use quotation marks. Well I certainly would use those, and gladly.

Then, as dubiously as I would test a tub of water, putting my foot in and not knowing whether it would be hot or cold, I said: "This author, who and what is he? Where is he? Living or dead? And would he just maybe, barely be possibly

available for perhaps a handshake or maybe even an autograph!" I don't think I have ever been childish enough before to ask about an autograph. But I ventured.

"Why, certainly." (Certainly is a word the Danes use lavishly, and I like very much the way they say it, and like them when they say it.)

Then he gave me the author's real name and told me he lived out of town, but sometimes comes in. He picked up the telephone, jabbered a bit, then turned and said, "He will meet you at Frascati (a popular and friendly sidewalk cafe) at 4:00 this afternoon." He showed me a caricature on the back of the little book, and said, "He looks like this, only is thinner."

I was at Frascati at 3:30, even though I had to miss part of a city tour to be there. I was watching for a very tall, very thin, very dark man with big glasses, small mustache, and big cigar. At 4:15 I was still watching. A man behind me might have been "the Dane," but he was too fat, and not as dark as the cartoon, and he was nervously smoking cigarettes. But he did have the mustache. I had turned again to look him over, when someone caught my shoulder, and said apologetically, "I am so sorry to keep you waiting. My bus was late."

Never trust a pen-and-ink drawing! He was not dark at all, but very blond, slightly graying, and the little mustache was blond also. But how could an artist draw a blond mustache with black ink? Bo Bojesen did have a cigar, however not a very large one, nor was he so very tall, nor so very thin. I'll never

quite know how he recognized me among all those other Danes and foreigners, for he didn't have a cartoon of me.

We chatted very pleasantly for too short a time. His wife is from Manchester, England, and he is making it his job and business to translate American poetry from the first in the 1600s to the last in the 1900s into Danish. So we had few language difficulties. I wished sincerely that I had known more about American poetry so I could speak understandingly of the things he was interested in.

We did find some subjects of common interest, however, for instance the Danish policemen. I told him I think they are very decorative. He replied, "They think so, too."

I won't give you his real name, for fear the policemen might feel too ornamental and get useful in his neighborhood.

Once upon a time, he told me, not bragging at all, that he wrote some poetry that another nation didn't like, and as a result he spent a few winters in Danish summer houses, and once left town hurriedly in a clanging ambulance, right through the Nazi lines. There was more, but it's not for publication, not about his poetry, I mean, but some escapages during the occupation of Denmark.

Wondering at the energy of a person who would try to translate into another language all the American poetry that I had not even ventured to read in English, I asked the old question that has probably been asked of every author.

"When do you work?"

“When you want to? when you feel inspired? or when you have to? regularly or at certain hours?”

The answer was: “I write when I want to, when I don’t want to, and when I have to.

“My secretary comes at half past nine in the mornings, and by that time I am supposed to have had my breakfast, taken a walk, and read all the papers.

“We work until about 3:30 or 4:30, then I have dinner, take a walk, read the papers; and work until about 2:00 the next morning.”

“But what do you do in your spare time?” was my next sensible question. I’ve heard that in an interview you should always ask a “personage” about his hobbies.

So I made the question more to the point. “What is your hobby?”

“Why, hopscotch, of course. My wife and I have no children. We are not talented in that direction. But I have a number of friends ranging from five to seven years of age; and we have some wonderful hopscotch tournaments during the time that I should be reading the papers.”

“What, no garden?” I asked. I had observed that every good Dane has a garden.

“Oh, again, I have a neighbor. And that is better than digging one’s own garden.” I was realizing all the time what a smart man he is.

Meg and Stan came along at about that time, by previous appointment. I told them I would be at Frascati until I met The Dane, or thereafter. We all went around the corner to Coc d'or for a delicious dinner. It was so nice to have our food ordered in Danish and explained in English. "Bo" and Stan discussed wars and peace; the Swedish-Russian episode, and a lot of other important matters. He offered, as a chief inducement why we should stay in Denmark, the fact that Danish Television is at present out of order.

Later, perusing a book on Danish government, I found his name—his real one—listed as a member of King Frederik's Cabinet. But I still won't tell you that name, for fear a Danish policeman might read this and discover that Bo Bojesen thinks that Danish policemen think they are vain. I wouldn't want my friend, a truly Great Dane, to spend another winter in a summer house, or to leave town in an ambulance. Those ambulances make an awful lot of noise.

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FRIDAY, JULY 11, 1952

Country Woman Abroad— She Continues Optimistic

BY LERA KNOX

I just LOVE this Europe. To be sure, having part of my family over helps a lot; but I don't think it would be too bad to try to tackle the entire continent alone, especially when one's spirits are high and digestion is good. A great many of the people with whom tourists come in contact speak English, and almost anyone can learn to make gestures or point to maps. But that's the hard way.

I have wished many, many times that I had paid more attention to European geography while I was in school. Although two wars have shuffled countries and boundaries around considerably, wars haven't yet moved the Kattegat or the Skagerak Sounds, or the Mediterranean.

Sometimes I feel so ignorant over here I feel like sending myself back to grammar school and standing me in a corner in "Granny" Mitchel's room.

And I feel that I should like to send myself to Mr. Duke's office and beg him to let me study Danish, Swedish, Spanish, German, Italian, Greek, and Cockney—instead of letting me skip French and Latin classes.

Languages over here are somewhat like clothes when you come out of a swimming hole: you feel embarrassed if you haven't got 'em.

My friend, Bo Bojesen, "The Great Dane," whom I have quoted before, said that one difference in people over here now is that after the war the optimists studied English and the pessimists studied Russian.

I said: "Well, judging by your excellent English, you must be an optimist?"

"Oh, but I have learned one sentence in Russian."

"What is that?" I queried.

He jabbered something, then interpreted it as: "Don't shoot me!"

I'm optimistic enough to appreciate my English, but just the same, I'd learn a little Russian, too, if I had to. And I'd always try to keep my hands free for gesturing, and my feet free for running.

Speaking of "The Great Dane" reminds me of a bit of conversation during the dinner that "the poet" (as he likes to be called) and Meg and Stan and I were enjoying a *Coc d'or*, popular little restaurant.

We had run low on subjects for conversation, when I brought up the topic of weather—a daring thing to do. It had been unusually cold and rainy for June. And I had been wearing my coat and sweater throughout the trip and wishing every day that I'd brought raincoat, umbrella, and overshoes.

“Oh, this weather is beastly,” he exclaimed. “It’s nasty!”

Those expressions and their accent can be accounted for when you remember that his wife came from Manchester, England.

“Well, I am wondering what it is like in winter?” I suggested.

He gave a sort of French-ish shoulder-shrug, and said, “Oh, so-so!”

Then he went on. “It is at least different. For example, my wife-to-be was here in August when we became engaged. When she came back as a bride in December, she was not sure she was in the right country.”

“I imagine you have a great deal of skating and skiing during the winter?” I ventured.

“Well, yes, when we can import enough ice and snow from Sweden. All of our ice and snow, like our raw materials, have to be imported, you know.”

Then it popped into my head, something I had read or heard about one terrible winter recently. “Well, I imagine that importing ice and snow from Sweden was very easy during

the recent winter when the entire Sound between Sweden and Denmark was frozen over!”

That was a dreadful thing to say to a Danish host. I might as well have donned a fur coat in Miami—if I’d had a fur coat and had been in Miami. One thing Europe has in common with Florida and California is that any weather that is unpleasant is “unusual.”

THE DAILY HERALD
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Country Woman Abroad— Finds Danes Apologetic

BY LERA KNOX

The Danes seemed slightly apologetic about three matters: first the weather, which admittedly has been rather cool and damp during our visit. But imagining what the weather in Tennessee must be like at the same time, I simply drew my coat closer around me and was thankful that I can do so. My Danish hostess, however, Miss Jennie Buhl, gets up every morning, looks at her own private weather observatory, a thermometer and barometer, and is “so, so sorry” that she can’t do right by me so far as weather for the day is concerned.

But to her amazement I never let the weather slow me down. I even took a boat-ride (in an open boat) in the harbor, on one of the drizzliest days we’ve had. It was just about the dampest I ever got, what with mist and fog and drizzle, too—except of course in the French bath tub when the ocean came up on me and the shower came down, but in the French bath I didn’t have on my only coat, shoes and hat! I got along very well,

however. Two ladies from England had two umbrellas, and they loaned me one which I shared with a bald-headed, bare-headed gentleman from Sweden, and a good time was had by all.

Another matter the Danes apologize for is the fact that their country is so small. Now that, of course, depends on the point of view. Looking at a map and comparing Denmark with say, Brazil, it does seem rather a small spot on the map. But riding backwards on a crowded European train for about six hours, from the German border at Flensburg to Copenhagen, after having had already ridden 12 hours in Germany previous to that, I felt sure we must be at the far end of Siberia before the train finally stopped at Copenhagen. I assured all apologizing Danes that the country is quite large enough for me.

And I am sure that the mythical goddess, Gelfion, who is reputed to have changed her four sons into bulls and with their help to have plowed the whole great island of Zealand, on which Copenhagen is located, off the southern end of Sweden, and all in one day—I think that Gelfion thought at least the Island of Zealand is large enough. Gol-lee! That was a whopping big day's work for one country woman even though she was a mythical goddess.

All right, here to prove that the Goddess Gelfion and I are not alone in thinking that Denmark is no small "skimshion," I'd like to note a few statistical lines from a little book I purchased from my friend Mr. Kaj Worm, the Boghandee. The book *This Is Denmark* was edited by Knud Gedde, and was

published in 1948, by Jul. Gjellerups Forlag. (I'm very glad I can copy those names for you and don't have to pronounce them.)

Mr. Gedde declares, "Before World War II Denmark was the country with the greatest per capita foreign trade. If a world map were drawn with the total area of the globe distributed among the various countries in relation to their trade, one would get quite another idea of Great Powers and small nations than is the case with an ordinary world map. On such a map Denmark would occupy more space than e.g., Brazil, though the area of the latter country is about a hundred times that of Denmark and its population eleven times larger. Denmark would, indeed (according to 1938 figures) occupy a little more space than the Soviet Union, which covers nearly one sixth of the globe and has one twelfth of the population of the world."

So much for Gedde's statistics. He, also, seems to think that little Denmark is big—commercially, at least. The Danes are not braggarts. They are just proud, and furthermore, they've got the butter and eggs and bacon and ceramics, and diesel engines and ships to prove that they are good producers and good promoters, despite their small acreage. The whole country is about the size of two of our smallest states, not including Tennessee. And from what I've seen and tasted I'm glad to brag with them.

The third and last, so far as I know, topic for apology, is that of mountains, or lack of them.

I think, perhaps, that Denmark is sort of semi-consciously waking up to the fact that tourists are abroad again, and that tourists' dollars and traveler's checks can be changed into Danish kroner to a good advantage.

I think, also, that Danes are looking, with just about one fifth of an iota of an atom of jealousy to Switzerland with its enormous influx of tourist business because of Switzerland's good food, friendly and honest people, and marvelous mountain scenery.

Now I haven't seen Switzerland as yet, but I believe I'd stake Denmark as second to none so far as honesty, friendliness, and good food are concerned. However, I believe they say that the highest hill in Denmark is not much more than 20 feet above sea level—and even as much as I like the country, there is little I can do about that.

The Danes, however, have done something about it. In their tourist propaganda leaflets they call attention to the fact that “in Denmark there are no mountains to hide the beautiful scenery.”

On one of the conducted tours through South Zealand, the guide very graciously offered to do anything for the guests except give them a mountain to climb. But he added, “That would make you too tired.”

Moving pleasantly along through the picture-book countryside in a sightseeing bus, he called our attention to the modern model farms; the ancient castles, or ruins thereof; and then as we crossed a tiny stream, no bigger than Helm's Branch, which he told us was once a "raging river during the glacier age," he dramatically announced, "Now we are leaving the Island of Zealand, the Country of Denmark." Everyone seemed astounded, of course. I began looking down the highway for a jumping-off place—then he added "we are now entering the Land of the Fairies!"

For hundreds of years, he explained, the King of Denmark dared not cross that raging river (3 feet wide), for fear he might meet the King of the Fairies in yon Fairy Hills (the hills must have been 12 or 14 feet high) and thus promote a war.

At last, however, one very great, brave, (and curious), king did venture across the stream in the middle of a bright moonlight night.

"He did not meet the Fairy King, however. He met only a beautiful girl!"

"But that," he concluded, "is another story." And having delivered this dramatic oration, he sat down.

I, sitting directly behind him, couldn't have noticed that he probably had his tongue in his cheek. So I bit, just as I was supposed to, I suppose.

I touched him gently on the shoulder, and queried, "But aren't you going to tell us the other story?"

“That, Madam, I must leave to your imagination.”

I suppose he meant that anyone who didn't have imagination should never have crossed the raging river (3 feet wide) and entered the Kingdom of the Fairies amid the Fairy Hills.

THE DAILY HERALD
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MONDAY, JULY 14, 1952

Country Woman Sees Tivoli

BY LERA KNOX

Try to imagine a combination Centennial Park, State Fair, refined street carnival, opera house, flower garden, music festival, and general gala, taking in five or six city blocks, perhaps. Fill it with fountains, gardens, music halls, lights, merry-go-rounds, Ferris wheels, little lakes with safe little boats, cute little ducks and swans, more flowers, more bright lights; three or four grandstands with home-town bands playing classical, popular, jazz, and all sorts of music.

Throw in a game parlor; a fairyland, brilliantly lighted dance halls, concert stages, pantomime plays, shooting galleries, singer's pavilions, dozens of delightful restaurants, souvenir shops, playgrounds, scooter-floors, parading bands of little boys dressed exactly like the King's Guards; little trains that anyone can ride, old millwheels, houses; more fountains, flower gardens, bright lights and ducks. All that together, thickened up with happy people from eight years old and under, to 80

years old and over—and you have what Copenhagen calls her amusement garden, “Tivoli.”

Tivoli, owned partly (51%) by the city and partly by fortunate individuals, was opened in 1843 and, to prove its success, the gate receipts show that more than 10,000,000 people had entered the gates before it was 100 years old.

It opens at 9 a.m. and closes at midnight, and on Saturday nights and special occasions you get fireworks, also, for 5 cents to 10 cents admission that you pay at one of the four or five entrances. Winners of “Wheels of Fortune” and other games and contests are paid in special Tivoli coins, which can be used to buy souvenirs or to pay for other amusements. But like a big world’s fair, which it rivals, the best things at Tivoli are free.

As for people, you are likely to meet the King and Queen and the three little Princesses; a group of Australian sailors on leave from their ship in the Atlantic; half a dozen GI’s on a weekend pass from Frankfurt; a group of tourists, or a typical Copenhagen family. You’ll see, also, couples from the city’s “Old Peoples’ Homes”; children from nursery school or orphanages; the richest, the poorest, and all the rest—and unless your bifocals are stronger than mine, you won’t be able to tell who is rich and who is poor.

Denmark thrives on being a land “where few have too much and fewer have too little.”

From before he is born the Danish infant is treated like a king. And an expectant mother is sort of a queen for a year.

She is provided free milk, free medical care and advice, service of publicly employed midwives; doctors when necessary, a visiting trained nurse during the first year of the baby's life; milk for the baby and mother until he is a year old; nursery and kindergarten for children of working mothers; in fact when Denmark adopted the stork as its National Bird, Denmark meant business.

And she sees that whatever the stork might choose to drop is going to get proper and adequate care, food, training, and education right on through the university; or through trade school, or in whatever trend his talents direct—and free at that!

There are more than 4,000,000 people in Demark, and I am sure I saw several hundred thousand of them. I noticed a smaller percentage of cripples, fewer ill or unhappy-looking people in Denmark than in any place I have ever visited.

There are two great breweries in or near Copenhagen, and it is said that by going out for a visit you can get all the free beer you can drink. A large percent—in fact all of the net profits from the breweries—are dedicated to arts and sciences, but I saw no alcoholics, and apparently no drunken people anywhere. To be sure I noticed one old man talking to himself, but I'm afraid I also could have been found talking to myself when no English-speaking people were around. And I hadn't been to the breweries.

Throughout the years of the Danes' working lives, or from the time they finish the compulsory school courses at 15 years of age, they pay a small sort of social benefit or insurance which entitles them to be ill and have hospital and medical care for not much more than a dollar a day, or less. Until they earn more than 10,000 kroner a year. And when the women are 60 years of age and the men are 65, they are provided with perfectly lovely, little, modern, model apartments for not much more than \$4 a month, with meals out at about 20 cents each. Elderly married couples have two-room apartments with kitchenettes; and single persons have single rooms with kitchenettes.

And all have congenial neighbors of their own age. Those are the people I meant when I spoke of the people from the Old Folks' Homes being at Tivoli. I saw some of those cute little apartments, and believe me they are worth living 60 or 65 years for.

I'd say that the Danes are "soaked in culture" from cradle to the grave (or crematorium). And they like it. They can get sick; get old; go to school; work; and have fun (at Tivoli or elsewhere) cheaper and more pleasantly than any people I know. But of course I couldn't learn all about the Danish social system in just the short time I could be in Denmark. The main thing is that the Danes all seem to like it.

To give authority for my one woman's opinion, I quote from the booklet *This is Denmark* by Knude Gedde:

“In all cases the benefit societies provide free medical attention, often combined with allowances toward medicine, dental treatment, massage, bandages, and the like. Hospital treatment is always paid for in full, and as a rule a benefit society will also wholly or partly defray the cost of special treatment in clinics or convalescent homes. The major societies, incidentally, are owners of such homes.”

So you see, Denmark seems to be an excellent, and pleasant, as well as an inexpensive place in which to enjoy ill health—if you can get it.

But Tivoli, just around the corner from the courthouse, is so much more fun than the hospital, convalescent home or clinic, and besides it is so reasonably inexpensive, that Danes just stubbornly seem to stay healthy and live to a very ripe old age, just to enjoy those cute little apartments.

THE DAILY HERALD
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Country Woman Learns Of Danes vs. Nazis

BY LERA KNOX

Standing at the bier of the late King of Denmark, His Majesty Christian X, at Roskilde Cathedral, where his casket is waiting for its marble sarcophagus, being made like those of many other royal rulers entombed there, I noticed among the wreaths left by Very Important Persons and faded little bouquets of field flowers evidently contributed by neighboring farmers' daughters, a small faded scrap of blue-and-white ribbon that seemed to be given a place of honor.

Curious as usual, I asked about it.

"Oh that," said the guide respectfully, "shows that he was the leader of our Danish Underground Movement."

I felt rather shocked. I had supposed that "underground movements" were something that should be kept under cover. But I remembered the information.

Looking over a magnificent collection of Christmas Plates cherished in the Museum of one of the great porcelain factories

in Copenhagen, I had asked about the significance of the Christmas plate designs and the years they represent.

The plates for the years of World War I were especially noticeable: with their crosses and helmets they made me think of the poppies that grew in Flanders Field. But the most significant plate of The World War II years showed merely a narrow avenue with a castle at the end. I asked about that.

Our host explained: “That one little picture meant a great deal to the Danish people. That is the castle where the Nazis kept our King a prisoner.”

From then on I began to make more inquiries about what is more properly called in Denmark, “The Resistance.” The stories I heard compare well with the stories we have heard of our own “Confederate Resistance” of a few years back, except that they are fresher—and more horrible, or at least some of them are.

Many of the stories naturally carry a twang of the Danish wit. For example, one that goes the rounds, is that one day early in the uninvited occupation, 71-year-old King Christian was out horseback riding alone as was his habit, when a German guard noticed him and asked a nearby Dane,

“Isn’t that the King?”

“Yes,” was the answer.

“Who is guarding him?”

“All of us Danes are guarding him,” was the reply.

An officer in one of the porcelain factories told us that a high dignitary in the Nazi realm ordered a magnificent and large piece of pottery to be made for his private collection. He inquired several times whether the pottery was finished.

“We have no coal to fire our kilns,” was the answer.

The German dignitary sent coal, but the factory decided that the Danish people needed the coal more than the kilns did.

Again the Nazi inquired about his porcelain. Again the reply was “No coal.” And again they brought more coal, and for another winter the Danish people were warmer as a result.

I know for a fact (for I saw it) that the enormous piece of porcelain was finally fired, but not until the man who ordered it had already gone to a place where, in the opinion of many, the heat might be so intense as to melt the porcelain even if it could be delivered to him.

In the Shell Building, the Gestapo are said to have had their offices on the lower floors and to have kept their Danish prisoners on the upper floors, as a protection from Royal Air Force bombing, just as they always put their prisoners in the front coaches of the trains as a protection from railroad saboteurs. But the Danes were clever enough to arrange with the R.A.F. to skip-bomb the lower floors of the Shell Building without too much damage to the upper floors.

The Shell Building and all other buildings that were damaged seemed to have been repaired in good order again. But not the hearts and memories of the people.

It is probable that my best source of information about the Resistance Movement might have been my landlady, Miss Jennie Buhl, for when unperturbed Miss Jennie speaks excellent English. But at almost any time the war is mentioned her English and her emotions are so upset, what she says is almost incoherent.

“They killed seventeen of my young men,” she exclaimed in tears. By her young men, I knew she meant the University students who boarded with her.

“They came to my door one night, put their guns in my chest, and shouted: We want Hans Buhl. We want Hans Buhl.”

Hans, her nephew whom she had reared, and who also was studying at the University, heard the commotion, from his back bedroom shouted “Farewell Aunt,” and scuttled down the narrow little circular back stairway that leads to a blind alley.

It went all the way the four floors to the ground. They didn’t know, also, that Miss Jennie makes a practice of leaving all her empty milk bottles at the head of this little narrow stairway. Of course it was dark. Hans knew about the bottles, so he escaped and got away to Sweden. The Nazi’s and milk bottles evidently tumbled all the way to the bottom. I could imagine

as they didn't know that it was circular, very narrow, and that she told me the story and showed me the stairway, that I could still hear echoes of Nazi profanity from the lower floors.

WARNING: To any other aggressors hunting Danish youth; Miss Jennie still keeps milk bottles on her back stairway.

And Hans—well, he was the blond young man who showed us to our room the night we arrived. He is the one who carried my typewriter and 3 1/2 bags down the four flights of front stairway when I left. And at 28 years of age he graduates this month from the University of Copenhagen as a doctor of veterinary medicine. He is one of the finest, most wholesome young men I ever met. And his handshake is truly Danish.

Because 21-year-old Hans' resistance was of apparent value to his country, Miss Jennie and the entire family changed their prominent and honored name for the duration of the aggressive occupation. She removed the beautiful and well-polished brass name plate "J. Buhl" from her door and apparently moved away.

A cousin, who was a prominent priest of a nearby parish, was not so fortunate as Hans. He was captured, tortured to insensibility, and left for dead. A good Danish neighbor, however, found him, revived him, hid him in a cave until he was recovered enough to be slipped away to Sweden. "Underground" brought word to his weeping family that he was still alive, and to encourage his friends they put a notice in the papers that he had been suddenly called out of town.

The Nazis inserted a notice in the papers that he was dead. That evening from a Swedish Radio Station he talked to his people. I didn't meet him, but saw several of his pictures in the family album.

A Danish newspaper man told me of how the Danish press was controlled and censored. There had been a terrible bombing attack on a nearby city. The Nazis demanded that the editor state in his paper that a bomb had been dropped but had only killed a cow. The editor did as he was told, but he added:

“The cow is still burning.”

That's the Danes for you.

It is not always the big things, but sometimes the smaller things that a person or a people do that expresses them best.

We in the United States do homage to “An American Soldier Known Only to God.” The French burn and guard their “Eternal Flame” in the Arch of Triumph to honor their unknown Soldier. But what did the Danes do? They brought the ashes of an Unknown Concentration Camp Victim and gave them a place of honor in one of their most revered cathedrals.

Again, that's the Danes for you.

THE DAILY HERALD
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TUESDAY, AUGUST 5, 1952

Country Woman on French Train

BY LERA KNOX

(Now in France)—

That French porter knew how to put me in my place on the train. I followed him down the 20-inch aisle, on one side of the coach, and at his behest wedged myself with seven other people into a compartment built for four while he shoved the bags into a little rack over my head. I was lucky in one way, however—I got second seat from the window riding backwards. I figured that from there I could probably see just as well, and by the law of gravity, would probably get fewer cinders than the man who was in the seat next to the window riding forwards.

I was glad it was still daylight so I could enjoy the scenery, for I felt I couldn't look forward to much conversation from all those foreign—what was I saying? Those people weren't foreigners at all. They were legal (I suppose) French citizens. They were in their own country! They were at home; I was the foreigner.

If you have never felt the feeling of being a “foreigner,” you won’t be able to imagine how I felt just then. For one thing I think I shrank up several sizes—even my tam was too big, it must have dropped down over my eyes far enough that I didn’t have to hunt for a handkerchief.

Of course, I wasn’t a bit homesick, but I would have liked at that moment to pick up the telephone and call up Alex or Mamma, or Elsie, or Mrs. Evans, or Mrs. Petty, or Mrs. Lavender, or Jane, or just anybody, and I’d liked to have been able to buy a *Herald* from the train butcher; or perhaps as much as anything else being as it was well past 7:00 p.m., I’d have liked to sneak into Knoxdale Café or Hines, or Masseys, or just about anywhere and pick up a hamburger and a coke.

Much of what I could see of Le Havre was docks and more docks, then ruins and more ruins. It wasn’t a very consoling sight at first.

But soon I saw some dirt—really good old fashioned dirt of the roadside and common garden variety. And all along the railroad tracks were the friendly faces of field daisies. Hot-house roses, even those with 4-ft. stems, never looked so good to me as those little wild French daisies—just exactly like those in James Napier’s field next to our garden at home.

Next I noticed wild ferns among the daisies. Quickly my thoughts were back on the north side of Stone’s hill and in Neely Hollow.

In a little ravine beside the tracks I saw a dozen or more small gardens, none of them larger, it seemed, than my 12'x16' living room, each as neat as a parlor carpet, and each bordered with rows of flowers—why bless those Frenchmen! They weren't foreigners at all, they were just jim-dandy good gardeners. And I really didn't feel so much like a foreigner after all. I felt like a citizen of the World and a fellow flower-lover with the French people.

A hill covered with locusts in bloom, elder bushes, Lombardy poplars, walnut trees, berry vines, also in bloom; sheep, already sheared; an old sow, monstrous and dirty-white, scratching her bacon on a pole fence; after all that ocean for six days that old sow, and those sheep and trees—I think even Johnson grass would have looked good to me at that moment!

More little gardens, neat and flower-bordered. Except for their lack of size and weeds they might have been our own garden back home, although they looked a lot more like Mamma's garden in town, especially with those rows of white and red and pink flowers.

Why, French potatoes were not much farther advanced than Alex's, especially the ones he put fertilizer on. The cabbages were bigger than ours, but maybe because the Frenchmen had ordered "frost-proof" plants from Georgia—then I realized that could not likely be. They had grown their own, perhaps, just as we did, but they planted sooner than

we did. That tall stuff couldn't be onions, not even in France. It must be French garlic, or maybe leeks. They seemed as tall as a man. Peas were tall, also, and white with blooms. A gardener and his wife waved pink peonies at the train. I felt better. I wasn't so hungry, either.

Cows in a pasture, red, and black and white spotted; more sheep; a square pond on a hillside—it looked funny shaped like that. A bunch of milk goats; a little graveyard covered with flowers. I might decide to like these Frenchmen after all.

On the whole that bit of French landscape might have been what Maury County would look like after someone had given all the weed fields and fence rows a sort of close shave and crew haircut. I could very well fancy I was in Tennessee until I saw a house. It was the houses and barns that were different from what I might see at home. They seemed all built of brick or tan stucco and all wore either tile roofs or thatched roofs. They were really pretty among all their bright green surroundings.

I think God must have made Tennessee and France very much alike; it was what Man has done to them that made them different.

Another huge white hog scratching his back. More goats and cows. Barley ready to cut. It would be the same at home—except the barley fields in France were just about the size of farm gardens in Tennessee! A neat orchard. Fruit trees, loaded with ripe cherries all along the roadsides and even along the railroad tracks. Bicycles on every road we passed. No auto-

mobiles, trucks, or even wagons that I could notice. A family bringing in a hay crop on pitchforks. A small farm so patched up with different crops it looked for all the world like the experimental plots at our own Middle Tennessee Experiment Station.

A tall Church spire (God is in France, too), with little tile-topped houses clustering around it like little chickens around an old red hen. That was a village. A big city, pitifully ruined with bombs—was God there, also?

More garden-sized grain fields; a little donkey pulling a cart. Cows staked out in the pasture. We went through a town that reminded me of the way they do towns in Georgia—run the railroad right down the main street. That gave me a closer look at shops and people. The French are really friendly. Everybody waves at the train. Even the baby sucking his thumb waved with his free hand. But they are probably selfish, too. He never did turn loose that thumb—or offer it to me.

I forgot to mention that the trees all looked like well-trimmed French poodles. When I noticed those I remembered hearing that the fuel shortage was so acute in Europe that the French trimmed every little extra twig off their trees for fire wood. That thought kept the high-trimmed trees from looking what I might otherwise have thought of as funny.

A life-sized monument of Christ on the cross in a neat, flower-covered cemetery. Perhaps some of our own soldiers were in that cemetery, too. Yes, definitely God is in France.

This sort of sightseeing and self-conversing went on for 2½ hours, then the buildings began to get bigger and blacker, and it was beginning to get dark. The few dim lights that were popping out seemed to make the dark look darker. Tall gray-looking apartment buildings—could people be happy in those? Yes, there were flower pots in the windows.

Then an immensely long, black shed, with only a few dim lights strung along it. It was not until the train stopped, however, that I really felt astounded. Here I was in Paris! Gay Paree? Bah! There was nothing whatever gay about that train shed!

Then I realized that there I was in the middle of 20,000,000 Frenchmen with 4 bags and two hands. I really felt “bagged” down. If I took out two, I would have to leave two! And I’d heard that Frenchmen weren’t any too honest. I might as well let them have all of them, so I picked up pocketbook, camera, and typewriter, and stepped off the train. I’ve never felt so alone in all my life.

What was the name of that hotel? A porter with a cart came along, and jabbered something. But it was so dark he didn’t look too dependable. However, he seemed a drowning man’s straw to me. I wondered how you say Franklin Roosevelt Hotel in French. Just then another man’s voice came over my left shoulder: “Can you use a little help?”

I turned around into the bosom of a brown tweed suit; raised my eyes to a stubby black haircut; and under that crew-cut was a grin that could only belong to Stan Morgan!

The only reason I didn't fall into his arms is that he is so tall. I jumped!

His next words were: "Meg is waiting at the gate, stationed there to catch you in case you got off the other side of the train."

My prayer to God and the United States Army had been answered. Stan got that leave.

It was a long, long way to the gate; but there stood Meg grinning in brown gabardine. Brown quickly became my favorite color just then.

Suddenly I wasn't even so hungry anymore. My knees weren't so weak. Why, I believe I could even have toted the bags, camera, typewriter, and 10-quart shoulder-bag all by myself. But they had taken all my load except the pocket book.

Paris began to look a lot better. And right at that particular moment I felt that backed by brown tweed and flanked by brown gabardine, I could conquer the Continent—especially if I could get a hamburger and coke to go on with.

THE DAILY HERALD
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‘Country Woman’ Is Back Home; To Tell About It

Mrs. Alex Knox is back home! “The Country Woman,” whose articles in the *Daily Herald* about her trip to Europe this summer attracted much attention, arrived Friday night at her Knoxdale home, her arrival a complete surprise to everyone, for she had originally planned to sail from Europe on September 21.

Mrs. Knox said she just suddenly decided to come back—and visit Europe again next year—when she visited Paris and saw, among other things, the American flag flying above the U.S. embassy. That did it!

She rushed to the steamship office, got her tickets changed to Aug. 6, and with only the clothes she had for her Paris week-end—and without her beloved typewriter—she bid her daughter goodbye in Paris, and took the train for the boat.

Result: she arrived in New York August 12 and was here two days later, tired but happy.

She begged off from writing an article about her return until she had rested up a bit, but promised one next week, “A Country Woman Returns From Europe.”

[Note: The follow-up article was apparently never written.]

— A NOTE FROM THE TRAVELS EDITOR —

On this first trip, from the passenger list of the *Liberté* Mother had ferreted out a fellow passenger, Monsieur Jean Desses, a fashion designer of international note. She interviewed him. She was still full of excitement over the incident when she arrived at our apartment in Germany. She announced that I was going with her to see the Paris fashion shows! I explained to her that getting into those shows was roughly comparable to going through the eye of the needle. She countered with the explanation that that would not be a problem because M. Desses had told her how to do it. Never one to turn down a trip to Paris, I agreed to go.

We attended the shows as they came up on the roster, and, each time, Mother remarked, “That was a good show, but that was nothing compared to what M. Desses’ presentation will be. Just wait until you meet him!” I finally felt the need to warn her that she should not expect too much of that designer, or to expect him to remember her. His was one of the last presentations of the show and on that near last morning we walked into the building where the presentation would be held. The building was beautiful, appearing to be almost all glass, and had been owned by the man for whom the Eiffel Tower was named.

As we entered the great glass doors, a man at the front of the entryway broke away from his conversation and rushed

over. He exclaimed, "Oh, Mrs. Knox! I'm so glad you could make it! And this must be your daughter from Germany! I'm so glad that you are both here! I hope the two of you enjoy the show."

And enjoy it we did. When the presentation got underway we saw the M. Desses' designs were not only classics that day, but they would be in great style ten years hence. Mother was too much a lady to say "I told you so," but I never did attempt to tell her anything about fashion or human nature after that. This leader in the international fashion world had recognized the woman who had sat on mules' heads to keep them from hurting themselves on that farm hillside back in Tennessee.

After the fashion shows Mother happened to pass the American Embassy in Paris, saw the American flag, and became instantly homesick. She returned home to writing for the *Banner* and the *Herald*, to working in the Knoxdale Café. And was very happy until we wrote that we were going to brave the post-war reconstruction and the food restrictions in London and try to see the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953.

Margaret Knox Morgan

