

Jeanne Severance Letters, 1945-1946

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Research Center for Delmarva History and Culture, Salisbury University, Salisbury,
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ENVELOPE

VIA AIR MAIL

(Sender) PAULINE DOLL ARC
CLUBMOBILE GP "H"
APO 340 c/o Postmaster
New York NY

(Addressee) Miss Connie Greene
Easthampton Long Island, New York

(Postmark) PASSED BY US ARMY EXAMINER BASE 1587

(Postmark) US Army Postal Service A.P.O 340
JAN 2 1945

CORRESPONDENCE

January 2, 1945

HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM NOT SO SUNNY FRANCE – (in fact it's a very frost bitten France these days)

Hi there Connie ya rat:

Hit the jack-pot when the old green(e) came through with that wonderful pk. No kidding Connie what a nice person you are to remember me. Thanks a lot.

Just had to turn out the light, for my blackout taint so good and there is a little excitement at the present. Am writing this via candle, but am used to that by now.

Have two great bits of news to tell you. The greatest thing first, and that is, by the time you get this letter, I will be Mrs. William Savage, that is if Jerry will let us have our forty-eight hours on January 18th. "Flip" is a Lt. in the F.A. and comes from Richmond, Va. He is only six five in his stocking feet and I just come under his arm. He sent over to the states for our rings, and if you look, you will see the sparkle of my diamond on the print of this letter.

Got a very sweet pk from Dr. Blyley too and must write her a note.

My other news is, that I have been made a full Capt with a raise in pay. I have been a second class Capt for over a year, but finally got my raise.

Sorry I can't write more now, but if you answer, I shall promise to write, for now that I am to be married I stay in at night. Seems funny not to date any more. Please write.

Love,
Tommie

ENVELOPE

AIR MAIL

(Sender) Jeanne Severance, A.R.C. 49917
 Am. Red Cross, A.P.O. 487
 c/o Postmaster, New York, N.Y.

(Addressee) Misses Connie and Martha Greene
 New town Lane
 E. Hampton, Long Island

(Postmark) Passed by US Army Examiner Base 1850
(Postmark) US. Army Service APO 487 FEB 18 1945

CORRESPONDENCE

February 7, 1945
Still Assam

'Lo again - - The land of make-believe still exists and I'm in it. What they call Monsoon Jr. here has just begun. It is so cold in the room you can see your breath - - it's the same outside but it dribbles. My morning off has rolled around again and you can't imagine what a wonderful feeling it is to have a bit of free time. One of the bearers is down stairs painting the furniture for our sitting room, another is mopping the floor under me, an Indian girls is washing a few odds and ends and the ponnyella is heating water for a steaming hot bath. Mrs. Vanderbilt could take a lesson from me.

The doby has just arrived with my clean slacks, shirts, towels et all. Everything I own bears my doby mark. It is a little black symbol which aids him in keeping my clothes separate from the others. When it gets hot this mark against your skin may cause irritation and infection. I'm not sure but I think it is made from the juice of a plant.

The other day we took another boat ride across the river. Of course I can't say which one but if you get out your map of Assam and toss a coin you're almost bound to guess it. There are only about eight or nine fellows living there. They work there in the jungle seeing that timber is cut and hauled. I was amazed when I saw where they lived. It is the equivalent of a hunting lodge in the Adirondacks. Every bit of it is their own work, not just the building itself but the furniture also. We are invited over for a venison steak dinner next week. They have a gun and ammunition ready for me if I can find time to come over and hunt some night. Who knows you may be warming your toes on my tiger rug after the war.

We visited The Shack last night (engineering officers cabin down by that river again) and had our second pig barbecue. One of the officers who had been the first to go in and make preparation for clearing the jungle for settlement was telling me what to watch out for down there during the monsoons. Spiders measure 5" in diameter. Leeches range from 1/4" to 8". You can't walk 200 yards without picking up about thirty of them. They work in through the eye laces in your shoes and through the seams in your trousers. I am not a coward by nature but I can't see myself whooping for joy when we have to continue our bi-weekly visit during the monsoons. It is so damp down there that toad stools grew all over the floor like a carpet, over night. There is even a herd of wild elephants roaming around in there. They

number about 150. Eight miles from the very place we were sitting a village was completely stamped out by these brutes. I have decided that the jungle is an excellent place to read about.

The Red Cross Club conducted a tour last Sunday to a tract of territory that isn't considered a part of either India or Assam and I was lucky enough to be able to go along. After about an hour's drive we drove our jeep onto a ferry to make a river crossing. A ferry in this country amounts to a platform built over two native boats lashed together. An outboard motor aft propels the contraption. This is an extremely modern convenience. The natives usually pole their boats. They run to the bow, jam their bamboo pole into the river bed, and then push the boat forward by holding onto the pole and running to the rear. It's the old tread mill principle. They might have a very good thing here in that they travel to their destination and get a certain amount of exercise at the same time. Quite different from lounging your way from New York to Buffalo on the Empire State!

After the crossing we drove right into the jungle on an oxcart trail. On either side plant life towered to heights that could look down on our tallest trees at home. I felt very much like Alice in Wonderland when she shrank small enough to crawl into the hole. The chief object of the trip is to see the Tibetians that come down out of the mountains for the winter. They look as if they had just stepped out of the National Geographic - - Mongol features - - fur caps - - skin boots - - long black snarled hair which give them the appearance of women - - peculiar dwarf like hands - - crooked short fingers tapering to a point. They are a short muscular people compared to the Indians. The revolting part about them is that you smell them before you see them. Their women are shy. They smoke vile smelling pipes of intricate design, part metal and part wood. They wear wide silver bands across their foreheads and have holes the size of a quarter through their ears. In these they wear great silver ear bobs. Some merely have one ear lobe pierced and push a much smaller earring through. One earring in these cases is considered full dress. I managed to buy one of these. It is a beautiful piece studded with turquoise and cost me about 70¢ in American money. When I get home I will have a ring made out of it that knock your eye out.

In selling things, these hill people will only accept silver. They take the coins, hammer them out and make their jewelry from it. I have two rings made in this manner. We're going into town this Saturday and by black opals and other stones to replace the agates ~~for~~ set in them.

The Tibetians we found very friendly. They have a pretty keen sense of humor too. The other natives we met were Abors. They aren't nearly so pleasant. It must be their headhunting background coming to the front. They're easier on the nose though. Their hair style is fresh off the edge of a bowl. About the only things you can buy from them are their funny straw hats and their knives.

On the return trip we met some Chinese soldiers who had just bagged one of those great white cranes. The wing spread was as wide as my own. The bird isn't really white, more tell-tale gray. His long neck gives him an anemic appearance. Nevertheless I wouldn't want him fluttering around in my face.

We have just begun our third month here and so Marcia and I are going to begin saving for our furlough - - two weeks vacation every six months. I want to go up through Agra to see the Taj, then on to Delhi and into Kashmir. We're going to take advantage of Cook's Tours. They cost a little more but when you have so little time it is best to have everything set. We figure we will need about three hundred dollars. At home this would look like a fortune but I will have no qualms about going through it in two weeks here.

Some of the girls have colds, a few, the blues, another fungus growth in her ears, but me, I'm in top shape. Our work can become routine and monotonous if we let it. We're trying to work out a schedule now whereby we eliminate all our afternoon runs and take shows out with us every night of the week. The problem is naturally talent for the shows.

Excitement runs high here over the German situation and it is doing wonders for the fellows. It's time to get the clubmobile on the road again. This is the life.

Love,
"Sev"

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CORRESPONDENCE

February 11, 1945

Dear Connie and Mart and Mr. and Mrs,

Now that I'm here in Assam it may seem like a bit of an anticlimax to tell about my trip here and the hundred and one things I have seen, all in the period of a couple of months. My first long letter to you was returned because of censorship. It concerned the boat trip over but will have to be chalked up as a lesson in improper letter writing.

The things we once read about in geography books have come to life. This is a most strange and exciting country. After India had grown to more than just a dark line on the horizon, we hung over the ships rail to catch our first glimpse of the (redacted). It is as pictured in the (redacted) which pass the sacred cows and street fare there by the water front (redacted). Some of their most modern apartment buildings and hotels are down on the waters edge making their waterfront a different type of place than ours in America. I wasn't going to miss a thing so I dashed below to watch them lift hatch after hatch, girder by girder until we could peer down five decks into the very hold of the ship. It was piled high with Christmas mail for the fellows in this theatre, duffle bags, foot lockers, and crates of equipment. As the Indians came aboard to load these things into the great nets that swung them from the ship we ducked into our stateroom to lock our bags and slip our money into our pockets. We were warned of the natives light fingered tendencies. We no longer carry American money. We haggle now in terms of rupees and annas. A rupee is a square of money slight ~~smaller~~ smaller than half of one of our dollar bills. It is worth thirty cents. An anna is a coin valued at about $1 \frac{7}{8}$ of a cent. You never accept a natives price for an article for he usually sets it at $\frac{2}{3}$ more than its actual worth. You are supposed to Jew him down – and he expects you to do so.

We disembarked at four in the afternoon and had to wait there in the station adjacent to the pier until eleven that night, at which time our train left. I was just fascinated with the unloading. Everything was done by hand. The natives placed boxes and things on their heads and carried them in that manner. Their garment was the draped affair you see in pictures of India – some wore turbans, others little black caps; just as some shuffled about in sandels while others went barefooted. The majority do the latter. They have the spindliest looking legs and arms but they are capable of lifting easily packages that would floor you are me. They are able to sit in that manner for the longest time. I tried it. I believe I can safely

say that I am no longer the athletic type. As we waited in the station Red Cross girls came down to meet and talk with us. We had thought it the most thrilling thing in the world, after thirty or more days at sea, to glimpse dry land again. These girls had taken a room in the (redacted) with an ocean view. Since seven in the morning they had been at their window watching for our ship. I guess they made one hell of a racket when she finally hove into sight. They were going home on that same vessel. They couldn't wait to leave.

Our train is out of this world. The first class cars are gems, that's what we called them; here they are known as compartments. All the English murder mysteries that have their local in India have usually taken place in a compartment on a train. These we have are identical. They are wooden with long seats that serve as beds at night. Above this is a bunk affect that can be let down from the wall, for another person to sleep upon. We have shutters, screens, and windows, electric fans, and lights along with a connecting John. Some of the kids have showers. These compartments are not connected. The doors open out onto the station platforms. Naturally at night we keep them locked for our own safety. Although they are horribly dirty and infested with cockroaches, believe it or not they are wonderful for us after seeing what the troops are traveling in.

The country we have been passing through is extremely flat with mountains off in the distance. It looks a great deal like our south west. But here they enclose their fields (rice) with mud mounds about five inches high. I suppose this is to hold in the water. Mud huts, tents, crude stone buildings and in many cases a blanket on the ground is home to these natives. It really stirs up the gypsy in me to see dark figures huddled about an open fire out in the middle of nowhere. As we traveled across India we began to see vegetation that might be classed as jungle – tall trees that looked something like date palms with wild monkeys swimming about in them –banana trees—and low thick vines. I've looked hard for tigers and elephants but up to this moment have only seen water buffalos and sacred cows. The latter along with goats, roam through the cities and villages. Two wheeled carts drawn by oxen are a very common sight even in the big cities.

The Indian railway system is unique. About every hour and sometimes more often than that the train pulls into a station and stands for an hour. During these intervals we drew boiling water from the engine and made coffee or boullion. We tried to pick up words from the natives, talked to the missionaries and in general stood around and stared. You never grow tired of looking in India. During the entire trip I think we saw mostly the lower casts. One morning very early we stopped for a moment in a rather large station and I propped up in bed and caught a glimpse of what seemed to be a much wealthier class of natives. They were clothed in some of the most gorgeous colored garments I have ever seen. Their reds and purples are unmatched for beauty. Hindus were standing in their special section and the Mohammedans in theirs. Drinking fountains, toilet facilities, and eating places are all labelled for their specific classes and religions. If we do eat their food over here we must make sure it is approved for the armed forces. Disentery can result in any laxness of this kind. Thick skinned fruits such as bananas and tangerines are O.K. but even then we wash them off with soap and water before peeling.

We lived for five days on K rations. Whenever you travel in India you go and purchase these. To eat anything else is dangerous because you never know where you're liable to be when chow time rolls around. It is a thoroughly balanced diet. I honestly think I gained weight on them.

In traveling we have always taken the Malaria warning to heart. Some of the G.I.'s. think it's a big joke but not me. Each night on the train one of the girls in our compartment went to bed with the alarm

clock. At four hour intervals she awakened everyone to reapply their mosquito repellent. Don't think this wasn't tough because it was. We'd no sooner get used to the joggle of the Indian railway system, fall into a deep sleep, to find it broken by one of our own jogglers. We had some hilarious times over that. In fact the entire trip was a picnic. Sponge bathing out of a bowl, eating out of tins, bridge games, and then crawling into our bed rolls at night and laughing ourselves sick at some of the things we were doing that we never in a lifetime had anticipated.

Calcutta is a conglomeration! Our first look at it was from an army truck and might be compared to a country hicks first sight seeing tour down Fifth Avenue in a bus. We thought we'd seen everything. The Arabian Nights was never like this. I wish I could describe the squalor. The streets are jammed with ox carts, queer little trams, buses, cars, and hundreds of people. Most of the shops are cubicles sitting right on the sidewalks edge. Plate windows aren't. Hours don't seem to matter much either for many of these merchants live right in their ships. About the nearest I can come to a description of these shops is a glorified outsized packing crate. We sought out a dress shop first thing. Any additional clothing issued us must be made.

There are no such things as white blouses or slacks, dresses or anything else. But there are bolts and bolts of materials on the market and Indians who squat all day on the floor cutting, fitting, and stitching. I have never seen them use a table. Sewing machines, yes, but no tables. Indian tailors are cheaper and quicker. One of our girls had a slack set made over night and where could you get such service stateside (term used to mean fresh from the states).

Calcutta has the shoppers paradise- -it is called New Market. This is one of the largest markets in the East and one where anything under the sun can be purchased. It comprises about 2000 stalls with goods from nearly every country in the world. Hundreds of little Indian boys with market baskets hound you for hire - - horrible looking beggars trail at your heels displaying their deformities. The meat market is a picture of filth. Cows and ravena stand around on huge slabs of meat which might be anything from horse to pidgeon. The butchers hold the meat down with their feet and draw the knife through. This was particularly horrible to me for these same feet have shuffled the streets of Calcutta which are publicly used as toilet facilities. You could not find a dirtier place in the world. They bath, eat and sleep all over the sidewalks. Lepers and malaria infested people mingle there and you can guess at all the other diseases not visible to the eye. Fakirs and fortune tellers are there by the hundreds. Snake charmers, street dancers, curs with scurvy - - all of these you mingle with the moment you go out onto the street. It is a great comfort to know we have every imaginable injection as a health precaution.

Another of the Red Cross girls and myself tolerater a couple rather stuffy officers for the sole purpose of being totted about in their jeep. We spent all of one Saturday afternoon seeing the high spots; Jain Temple, the Marble Palace, Victoria Memorial, the Black Hole of Calcutta and the burning ghats.

The Black Hole is disappointingly enough a small stone slab marker. About the time of the Seven Years War in Europe between the English and the French, the wave of hostility began to strike upon the shores of India. Naturally each nation started fortifying their settlements here. The turbinid big wig at the time didn't go for it one bit and so he sent his Indian forces to subdue the English. He managed to drive them out of Calcutta with the exception of a small force who were stuck defending the fort. These expendables were finally forced to surrender. The prisoners numbering 146 were locked in a small room for the night and in the morning it was found that the majority of them had died of suffocation. An English Lord erected a memorial for the alleged victims. Some very learned gentlemen after much study and beating of brows deduced it was physically impossible to cram 146 persons in a small room 18' x

148' x 10" and so the memorial was removed by the government of Bengal in 1940. So ends history lesson one, which just goes to prove that some one is always taking the color out of life. Leave it to the Englishmen! Really, I have never seen a homlier race of men. I've decided they made up a general facial mold for them and neglected to turn up the corners of the mouth. No wonder they think Anthony Eden is the best dressed man in the world - - the world bounds the coast of England and in contrast to their attire he resembles a fashion plate from Esquire. To preface the subject, English women look like the early Girl Scout movement in America.

To get back to my tour of Calcutta - - the burning -ghats! We in America put much pomp into our ceremony but in India they do away with the pomp. The burning ghats are cremation grounds for the majority of Indians who believe that burying the dead contaminates the ground. There is still another group who believe that burning them contaminates the air also - - so they throw them to the vultures. The burning-ghats are usually walled in areas along the edge of the Ganges; no building, just an open area into which anyone can go. So we did. Trenches had been dug out about ½ a foot deep, wood laid across these, a body and then more wood. When they have the pile ready for lighting all you can see is the head protruding from one end and the feet from the other. We stood and watched one go up in smoke. There is no smell except that of the burning wood and I was only three feet from the fire. When the body is finally burned, they shovel the ashes off to the side and grab another from the waiting group of corpses. Eventually the ashes are thrown into the Ganges. It only costs about \$3.50 in our money but strictly no frills. I just hope I never see one of these events where they believe in hanging the body to the nearest tree and letting the vultures go to it.

The Jain Temple is a marvelous structure of marble, glass and silver. We had to remove our shoes and pad in in our sock feet. Like Buddhism, Jainism forbids the taking of life in any form. Orthodox Jains observe this precept by wearing a strip of gauze over the mouth to prevent the unthinking destruction of small insects which are not visible to the eye. The first time I saw one I was reminded of a surgeon standing ready at the operating table.

I saw more in my two weeks stay in Calcutta than I have for a month here in Assam. Here I am riding around on a clubmobile, which is what I'd wanted all along, and serving coffee and doughnuts to the fellows. Our schedule is a stiff one for just two of us. All morning every morning we service the air field and adjacent ordinance engineering, sheet metal and air corps supply shops. In the afternoons and evenings we go to outlying units which have no easy access to Red Cross Clubs. We can carry four drums of coffee each holding about 150 cups of coffee and 3000 doughnuts. We are equipped with a radio, vick, running water, books writing paper, drawers of cups and electricity. The clubmobile was an original job of conversion from a 6 x 6 radio truck. There is none other like it in the world. It is about to be christened The Classey Chassis.

We're beginning to contact G.I. talent on our runs and taking them with us for entertainment. Right now we are mixing in Bingo parties and quiz programs. Though our day in most cases runs into midnight it is worth every bit of expended energy. You can understand then why I say that to really learn much about a country in war times is almost impossible.

Our first and only exploratory trip here in Assam was a boat ride down the river. This part of Assam is beautiful - - a clear ~~viss~~ river from which we viewed the great peaks of the Himalayas off in a blue haze, with funny little cloud puffs blobbed here and there. On our return trip we stopped at a quant Indian village. The head man, we call him King, has the power of life and death over his people. No flowing robe nor crown and scepter - - he looks like all the rest of the inhabitants but his word is law. We came

upon him hollowing out a boat from a huge log. It is a great long narrow dugout, extremely primitive but water worthy. They pole them down the river. In the same village we watched women at their looms making thread and from this cloth. Everything is done by hand. Money means nothing to them.

There is much more to tell but the lack of time forces me to leave it for another letter. This life is not a hardship. Crane's plumbing fixtures have yet to be perfected here but these and so many other things are not missed. In this work there is no call upon intellectual or creative powers but I believe I am learning to be patient and pleasant far beyond my original capabilities. Now and then we feel that we are standing still particularly when we hear what the kids at home are doing. It is gratifying to know that we are making things a bit more bearable for the hundreds of men here who are standing still also. Some of them are horribly bitter. I used to condemn people who lacked a natural buoyancy to carry them over the tough spots. Here you look longer at a fellows better characteristics. In many cases they aren't surface material and you've got to dig down and find them or you're pulled down into the same state. Then we're no good to the Red Cross. This isn't a Pollyanna edition, just something you see every day over here.

I'm putting on weight, bouncing about in jeeps, being spoiled no end by the male majority. In about sixteen months I'll be home feeling imposed upon when I have to do my own washing, dishes and polishing of shoes. Incidentally I am putting my reservation in early for a return trip by way of the Mediterranean so I can complete my trip around the world. Then you can yawn yourself in front of an open fireplace while I monopolize the conversation.

My best to all (handwritten)
"Sev"

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CORRESPONDENCE

February 18, 1945 or thereabouts!

'Lo Folks,

Still at it in Assam. Monsoon Jr. continues to dribble down upon us and has had such an effect on a certain road that we have had to temporarily eliminate one of our runs. Obviously I can't mention the name but it's going to make awe inspiring conversation when I come home and schpeel on about how a leg of it was built right under us. To get the Clubmobile through one night a bulldozer had to remove a pile of dirt they'd just dumped in preparation for building the road up another foot. Today we took detours through rice paddies to reach some of the men. Though our truck is a massive top heavy vehicle it takes a pretty deep rut to stick us.

Last week the colored unit we have been taking entertainment to, were celebrating their third year overseas. They wanted to show their appreciation for what we had done and so on arriving we sat down to a southern fried chicken dinner. The only flaw in the ointment was that they had all been drinking heavily. Their commanding officers never have been in evidence and this night was usual. When we got our orchestra going bedlam broke loose. Vachel Lindsey's Congo was reborn. They shook, leaped, stamped and yelled. We picked out two of the biggest and soberest colored men, who had been exceptionally nice to us, and stuck by them. I was extremely uneasy until time to depart. Fights were beginning to break out. Our exit was well timed. We have to be equally careful when we serve units the night of payday or when beer rations have been distributed. Our driver affords some protection and then there are always a few dependable fellows who would thrash the day lights out of anyone who got out of hand. City and state loyalties are strong ties over here. They, too, can be relied upon.

I witnessed a close call one night just outside the Red Cross Club. A colored fellow had been drinking some of this "bamboo juice" the Indians sell. One of the white men incited him. He pulled a knife and went for the fellow. Our boss stepped between them and managed to break it up. He took a long chance but was lucky. I was one of the few to see it and just as an onlooker I was pretty well shaken up.

These fellows insist on buying Indian liquor. It is doped. Instead of getting pleasantly drunk they go beserk. Marc'bia, the girl I work with, and I, have refused to attend big parties. Neither of us get a kick out of being mauled by a bunch of drunks. I am incidently alive right now because I made this decision

and held to it. A couple fellows practically insisted I attend a dance. On their way to it they had a terrific accident. I shall never quite understand how so many men can have reached maturity and yet not learned to make leisure time constructive and enjoyable. I talked to a special service officer about it. It is a little more understandable when you hear that eighty percent of the men in the service never finished highschool. We've certainly slipped up somewhere along the line. Just let me talk to the school teacher that doesn't think her job is important!! If they'd forget about a years military training for every man in the country and insist on a highschool diploma it seems to me they'd be just as far ahead.

It is almost unbelievable the organization entailed and fulfilled in keeping an army going. From the standpoint of the men within the ranks there seem to be many foolish things done, many unnecessary duties performed and hosts of other details overlooked. But as a civilian living in the midst of it all and yet an onlooker, I am awed. The fellows who go on ~~air~~ air drop missions are just one example. If the supplies aren't kicked out at the proper time and place some unit doesn't eat. They pile the stuff alongside one of the openings in the side of the plane. At a given signal a fellow called the Kicker, ousts them. Down at the front it is necessary to circle and return to the same spot, there is so much to be dropped. In making the circle the plane passed over enemy lines. So the Kicker shoves out incendiary bombs etc. If I were up at our front lines I'd be just slightly uneasy wondering whether he was one of a long line of absent minded professors.

I am in the midst of reading Mother India by Katherine Mayo. Her first chapter describes ones first impression of this country to a tea. The rest is not pleasant reading but informative and astounding to know that people today live in such horrible conditions. I feel no hope for India's becoming an independant country in my life time. From what I have seen the book is authentic and you might be interested in leafing through it.

After our run down to the river today, we stopped off for a brief fishing trip. Van Dyke who wrote Fisherman's Luck would squirm at this unsportsmanlike practice. You drop a depth charge and ride around and scoop the dead fish up in a bucket. The majority of our haul were the length of my arm and weighed about eight pounds. In just half an hour they were skinned, boned and in the pan. In the states in in just half an hour you'd be paying a five hundred dollar fine. I hang my head in shame but they were delicious.

There being a scarcity of women here we all get along fine. We're having just a little trouble with one though. The other night we drove up in a staff car with a couple majors and she only had a captain. Tonight we're entertaining corporals and she has a second luey so tomorrow we will exchange cheery "Good mornings". Ah women!

I gave up hard liquor when I came to India for lots of obvious reasons and one in particular. The Red Cross and officers get a liquor ration each month - - the enlisted men - - beer. So when someone has to change a flat tire on the Clubmobile at the wee hour of 1:00 a.m. I wave the monthly quart under some enlisted man's nose and abacadabra -it's done. Besides, it creates good will.

In prewar days I recall being quite satisfied buying my shoes from a local speciality shop. Now I hop a jeep to the nearest Chinese boot maker and have them made to order for the nominal fee of \$7. We're going to take a pair of spectators over as a model and see if the same honorable gentleman will make up a few pairs.

We had cocktails at one of the tea plantations last week. The Englishman invited us to join him at tennis some afternoon but we will probably never get around to it. Over his dining room table hangs a piece of heavy material about three yards long by two feet wide. A native stands over by the wall and jerks a rope stitched to this gadget. It swings to and fro batting up a pretty fair breeze. Electric fans being a rare item, this makes an excellent substitute. It is better anyway because what the "wog" (Indian) receives as pay would be less than the price of the electricity consumed.

You can't imagine how helpless I have become. I lift nothing. Matches and ash trays are brought to me. Doors are held open. Clothes are cleaned and pressed. My coffee is poured. I'm hanging on to the last claim to independence and buttering my own bread. No one is going to call me lazy!

Someone has said, Nehru, I believe that the cloud formations in India are the most beautiful in the world. Obviously the man has never "moon"ed of a twilight on the shores of one of our upstate Finger Lakes. Nevertheless he speaks of what he knows. In the early mornings, still the crisp kind here, the clouds form a picturesque skee trail down through the sky; almost but never quite reaching the horizon. There is something very cold and metallic in their coloring. A bit like a New England landscape on a gusty winters day. The afternoon skies are much softer. Scatterings of woolly white lambs only their backs visible as they reach to much blue grass. A soft breeze – and phuf—they caper on. There is no grandeur in the twilight—just one narrow line of angry red close to the sky line. It is too intense a shade to dream upon, made more for brooding. You can feel all the jungle cats crouching, waiting for night to fall and the kill. Nights are pitchy black of a dullness that seems to even steal some of the twinkle from the stars. But in a full moon the dirtiest cities of this country can be beautiful. All the squalor is moon glown. This is the only time India seems to get away from herself - - rise above her own degradation. So runs my impression of Indian heavens.

Here I am plunked in the upper left wing of a bungalow on some tea plantation and just the distance of one city block, in a similar bungalow sit Lily Pons and Andre in the midst of a gay dinner party. They have just completed their tour of China and are ready to hop off to Burma. Marcia and I would be at that same dinner table if we had been able to tolerate a certain "sis" of a lieutenant. I remain as ever critical so miss some of the more spectacular things.

I have gone and done just the thing they warned me about. I played tennis in a shirt bearing the doby mark, prespired, became infected and so have a spot of doby itch on my neck. Hives were never dug like this is clamoring to be. I have found the old Severance stubbornness a handy thing to have around in this case for I refuse to scratch though I'd like nothing better. They have to ship me home with a violent case of frustration but whatthehell. Other than that spot the size of a quarter, I am a perfect physical specimen. Everytime I flex a muscle I rip another shirt. My cheeks are blobbing out, my fanny the same, my hair will be long enough to sit on by the time I'm home. I can't see any advantage in the latter but I see all kinds of disadvantages in letting these Indians cut it for me. Besides, I long to be the "deb" type. P.S. I've worn slacks ever since I arrived. You travel, dance, and eat in them. I quote, "Proper dress for women for 6 p.m. on will be slacks and long sleeved blouses". We have to wear slacks on the Clubmobile too, to keep the fellows from putting sugar in their doughnut holes and eating the cups.

Enough!

Love
"Sev"

ENVELOPE

AIR MAIL

(Sender) Jeanne Severance, 49917 A.R.C.
Am. Red Cross, A.P.O. 487
c/o Postmaster, New York, N.Y.

(Addressee) Misses Connie and Martha Greene
New town Lane
E. Hampton, Long Island

(Postmark) Passed by US Army Examiner Base1850
(Postmark) US. Army Service APO 487 MAR 4, 1945 487

CORRESPONDENCE

March 4th - - bright and sunny!

Hi there!

The Clubmobile rolls on, Marcia and I in it. In case I neglected telling you, Marcia is a very attractive girl with a wonderful sense of humor. Men fawn at her feet. She exudes a sparkling bit of patter that's puts her in n the ground floor in the wink of an eye.

I have ridden in every type of army vehicle imaginable. The back seat of a jeep can be the most provocative to a woman's fanny of any I know. You glue your eyes on the road ahead and try to post over the rockier ruts. I feel practically qualified for a bareback opening with Barnum and Bailey. Gravel trucks are too dusty; staff cars are luxurious; command cars bounce; weapons carriers should be ordered to carry weapons only. All of these at one time or another have been my means of transportation. A smooth highway in a stateside limosene will take all the challenge out of riding. I have yet to go up in a plane. Next week the girl you once knew will be flying "The Hump", putting her feet for a moment on Chinese soil. This will naturally depend on weather conditions. I am not being transferred, merely an adventure to drone my grandchildren to sleep with, if and when. That reminds me of a prayer one of the Red Cross girls used to say each night, "Lord I ask nothing for myself but please send my Mother a son-in-law."

One of the men we serve had his carpenter build us a couple lounge chairs for our sitting room. We've had convertible cushions made to order - - dark blue natural wood with a matching book shelf. Our walls are solid blue, just lighter than a royal. The floor is brilliant red, making a wonderful background for our white nunda rug figured with some strange type of lower. At the windows are white curtains with red borders made from the saries, the native dress of the women in this country. On a little red tea table sits a lamp made from a Jap millimeter shell with ash tray to match. A window seat decked out in gaily colored cushions completes the picture. As soon as the lampshades are finished we're having a "room warming". The colors may sound violent but it would amaze you how attractive this little room has become. They say that in the monsoons you don't have the strength to go any place. You either flop into bed or crumple into the nearest chair. I am going to enjoy crumpling in this room!

We took a short drive into the jungle yesterday. I have a better name it - - tanglewood. No tigers; no elephants; not even a bug. Just dashing in and out again teaches you nothing. It is like the woods at home. You have to sit quietly for a while. This would be an opportune time to philosophize but creative thought is much more satisfying so I leave it to you.

The Hindus have been celebrating a holy day for the last week. They half chant half sing to a little band consisting of a couple crude drums, symbols and bells. As the band plays it shuffles about in a circle. Their feet never seem to match their music (if you can call it that). The natives who join in the dance stand around and shuffle in like manner. There is no hip motion; now and then a little hand clapping is introduced but even this is slight and not one bit exerting. Their music and dancing remind you over and over again of the monotony of their lives.

On the night before the last big day they process from their hamlets carrying wood for a huge bonfire. Everyone becomes fanatically drunk. They squirt red, blue and purple powders all over one another. It reminds me of a high school initiation or a rotten egg session on Halloween night. The following day is spent sleeping and on the next day they are ready to return to work. During the entire celebration you get more of a kick out of not seeing any of the activity than you would putting in an appearance. It sounds incongruous but sitting in your room at night hearing the beating of the drums and the chanting off in the darkness, knowing the jungle is all around you, stirs even the most lethargic imagination. The picture you create for yourself is far more vivid and mystic than the scene itself. It is a little similar to seeing a movie that has received rave notices from your friends. As you slide into your seat you anticipate Metro Goldwin Mayers bronze statue winner. The whole effect even though it is exceptional is lost on you you are so busy trying to discover what Mrs. Buzz or Mr. Whodunnit found so enchanting. Two months ago a colored fellow shot an officer for slapping him in the face. He escaped after being tried and given the death sentence. The M.P.'s. have been manhunting ever since. For the past two days the search has narrowed down to our vicinity. Everyone is keyed up. Armed men step out from some of the most unexpected places and ring out a 'Halt!' The colored fellows were confined to their areas one night so they would not be mistaken for the victim and shot. Our house is guarded. The Clubmobile is searched wherever we go. The fellow is armed, needing medical care for a wound in the leg and is desperate. He speaks fluent Hindustani and would be almost impossible to perceive properly disguised. The men have almost forgotten the war existed in their narration of the progress of the hunt to an uninformed listener. Traveling about as we do we hear all angles of the story. The enlisted man who has received what he firmly believes is a raw deal, side with the fellow for shooting the officer. Men who have been deprived of their driving licenses over here for speeding sneer at the M.P.'s. for not being better shots and having failed to apprehend the murderer. Southerners rant about the age old problem. Negro sympathizers aid his escape. The whole hub-bub is typically American and you see for a brief instant some of the stuff future wars may be made of. Things like this make you wonder about peace. Too many people are bound in by their own prejudices and bitterness to see beyond themselves to everybody. We seldom think of America still in its youth, but it is!

Warm weather is closing in on us and the clothes we started out with are beginning to rot away. This kid would appreciate your tucking a pair of white cotton ankle socks, size ten, into an envelope and air mailing it off to me. They will arrive in two weeks. "Til then I think I can carry on with my one pair.

Cheerio!

Love
"Sev"

P.S. How about Darky's address. I can see you people freezing to death out there. Take your vitamin pills.

ENVELOPE

AIR MAIL

(Sender) Jeanne Severance, 49917
 Am. Red Cross, A.P.O. 487
 c/o Postmaster, New York City

(Addressee) The Greene Family
 Newtown Lane
 East Hampton, Long Island

(Postmark) US Army Postal Service APO 437 April 20, 1945

Passed by US Examiner Base 1850 Army

Handwritten: received Apr 30

March ninth! Beginning of
my fourth month.

“Lo Kids_____

Spring in India! The mornings are wonderful; sunny bright; clear sky;’ just a slight nip in the air. Then in almost no time it’s afternoon and unbearable. This is only Spring!!!

My flight over the Hump has of necessity been cancelled for good. The story connected with it cannot for censorship purposes be told. In fact I wouldn’t doubt that letters right now are being more rigidly censored to prevent it leaking out. It would not paint a pretty picture, glared across the front page of your evening news.

This whole damned war is a horrible waste of lives. Every day there is something to remind us of it. I get so mad I could just sit down and cry with rage. The minute my two years are up I am coming home and quitting the Red Cross. There must be something more I can do than serve coffee and doughnuts to men overseas. Young people have got to see that war is not the answer to international disagreement. I had hoped to serve a while in China but a new order has just come out that a years service there is compulsory. It costs too much to send women over. Finding the job unbearable they apply for retransfer. There has been too much of this in the past. Anyway, I may see Burma before I return.

The hot water situation remains unpredictable. We haven’t had a hot bath for a whole week. Frankly we’re beginning to scratch. The mess sargent suggested we devote one of our evenings off to listen to his drunken dialogue. Because he is so completely adapted to his work (a mess) we were conveniently busy. Dire results!

He controls the faucet that controls our hot water. The minute we come into the house it goes off. Marcia and I have snooped out less obvious routes home and are creeping like thieves in the night into our own bungalow. I just steam every time I think of it---but being a cheerful bloke, I suppose a Turkish bath is better than none at all. I am a woman of determination so I can soft soap the Indian cock down

there with a pack of cigarettes now and then. When the mess sargent leaves the kitchen the faucet mysteriously twists itself on. Ah mystic India!

I am continually amazed at the primitive ways of these people. Today I saw a woman mashing grain. It is accomplished by the see-saw principle. At one end a native works the board up and down with his foot. At the other weighted end, the woman places grain on the sun baked floor in a spot where a big peg on the end of the see-saw will strike. The footwork fellow works at a pretty fair clip. The woman feeding the grain has to be quick with her fingers or they aren't. There are a vast majority of Indians living this same way, spending their life time just keeping alive from one meal to the next. It is startling to discover how little in a thousand years this life of theirs has changed. They still do the same things with the same utensils. The village shopkeeper on the same tray offers for sale the same bananas and fish. They carry the same burdens as their ancestors carried generations ago. The centuries have passed leaving no trace upon them. Had Rip Van Winkle been a character in Indian fiction and awakened after his century snooze in any one of these native villages, he would have found himself completely at home in the round of daily life.

2

We can stand breathless viewing the Taj Mahal in the moonlight—we marvel at the ancient temples both the greatest monument of antiquity in this country is man.

The fellows let me shoot a round of shots with a carbine the other day. It's a honey of a gun; light, accurate and can be fired fifteen times before reloading. As soon as the transportation is arranged in—off to the hunt. One of these guns would merely suffice to tickle a tiger so they're going to give me a little practice with an M1.

I have been driving our clubmobile on a couple of its return trips and have become adept at double clutching, backing up and turning corners. A 6x6 has eight different gears to master. I am quite proud of myself. Anyway I am assured of another means of existence should I want to see some of our own country on arriving home. A job with a trucking company would do it.

Goats and kids roam the countryside here in Assam. Some are jet black; others snow white. Then they combine like rabbits and you have a white goat with a black stripe down its back and one underneath giving a reversed skunk effect. The kids are as cuddly as the toy wooly ones tots trundle to bed. They leap and land—stiff legged; a playful butt and they're off through the meadows. Maybe meadow is not the word. A meadow should be lush green with the sweet fragrance of clover and fresh cut grass. In Assam it is a barren stretch of scorched earth splotched every so often with dust laden green, cropped close by the cows. These, having become useless, are left to wander at will. It is paradoxical when you think of it—the cow is sacred—they worship it—they torture it—they turn it loose to die slowly of starvation. In return it is eating away their countryside. This economic misfortune is self inflicted.

Marcie's watch and mine too have suddenly taken this matter of time into their own hands. (very funny) They are gaining as much as 5/4 of an hour a night. At this rate we figure we'll be far in advance of civilization in a year or two. Figuring further we decided we are so remote from the same that by the time our words of progressive wisdom six-cent themselves across the ocean to you, it will be old stuff. Obstacles, always obstacles! Anyhoo, we have a rupee bet on tonight's race. I have all the confidence in the world in my little Elgin but I expect Marcia's to run a close "second". Ouch! Out of all this I should be able to reach some conclusions on this threadbare subject, time. 1. We have it. 2. We haven't. 3.

It flies. 4. It stands still. 5. The working man punches it. 6. I take mine. 7. It's a magazine. 8. It's the tick in a time piece. 9. It's now. And finally 10. Old Doc Einstein has abolished it but they haven't got the news at Sing Sing yet. (Physically I'm O.K. It's just those vitamin pills.)

The ship we came on has been sunk, right along the same route we followed. I hate to think of the number of lives lost in that fatality. At least 3,000 families have been informed of the death of one of their sons or daughters. Someone should compile all these statistics and print them in readable form to be required reading for all college students. There has been enough vaguery concerning anti-war education. Just saying war is hell isn't enough. It should be a realistic course encompassing the social, economic, psychological and physical effects of war. People would decry it as brutal but the truth about wars always will be. It wouldn't have to be the blood and thunder type of thing. It would be a wonderful work for a doctorate but this must have been done before and it seems to me a doctorate must be an original investigation.

My letters are becoming "rave-on" monologues so as the Texans say, "Best we close shop!"

Love
"Sev"

ENVELOPE

AIR MAIL

(Sender) Jeanne Severance, 49917 A.R.C.
 Am. Red Cross, A.P.O. 487
 c/o Postmaster, New York, N.Y.

(Addressee) Misses Connie and Martha Greene
 New town Lane
 E. Hampton, Long Island

(Postmark) Passed by US Army Examiner Base 1850
 (Postmark) US. Army Service APO 487 MAR 19 1945

CORRESPONDENCE

'Lo Mart & Connie

Propin' up the pan again! Yup, the stateside writing paper supply has depleted and this sunny sheet is the result of an M. R. (moonlight requisition, swipped if you must). The week has been void of any adventure or excitement. Like people, I'll continue though I have very little to say and because I think a certain amount of small talk is essential socially.

I am now an old hand at driving the Clubmobile. I double clutch like a veteran. This last week I added one wooden and one concrete post to my "bump into" escapades. Wooden ones go down like tooth picks but cement doesn't give an inch. Next week I go under the hood into the motor. To be a good truck driver I should be able to give it first eschelon maintenance. So says our driver!

Tadada!! I put on my first, and might I add the only dress I brought with me. It was my slinky black job - no room for a label - just me. I wore my hair loose, bobbed on emerald green earrings with dinner ring to match, skipped the dinner and Jeeped off to a dance. There were probably fifty men and six of us girls. I had the time of my life. I allowed myself one drink and then breezed off the most atrocious line this side of the corn belt, and just barely this side. I froze out a colonel who tried to pull his rank on an extremely attractive lieutenant. I reminded him that if he was going to bring army regulations onto the dance floor it would necessitate his requisitioning through the proper channels, the initial memorandum of which should be approved by my date. He was quite a dashing fellow, probably smelled liquor on my breath and classified the remark as enebriated babble. A woman can get away with anything if she gives it the light touch, talks a bit with eyes and turns up the corners of her mouth.

I have viewed my first scorpion.

Comments on species:	Ugh!
Size:	For one with a delicate stomach, too big to squash.
Special features:	Pinchers up in front Four longish legs
Special abilities:	Swimming (I tried to drown it) Crawling Paralitic bite Keeping women on the run

Individual investigation:

~~Do they fly tee?~~ (on second thought, science will have to suffer to insure my fear mechanisms remaining at a normal low.)

Conclusions:

Scorpions are in the same class with scarabs and therefore belong in Egypt!

Our Clubmobile driver is a rare personality. He's a colored fellow from Brooklyn. In the course of his lifetime he has done very little remunerative work, for the pool rooms, the dance halls, drumming in a hot band and amateur boxing got there first. He says a smart Joe can live off "the one born every day". "Dress sharp," says Bill. Draped trousers and the key chain aren't just a permanent fashion in the Harlems at home. Any one who crosses him will have to stand up and swing. His big mistake someday may be in his total disregard for human error. There is no second chance in his code. He has taken great pride in the Clubmobile and pulled us out of a couple touchy incidents with the colored men we serve. More and more situations of this nature are arising. We have tried to cope with them casually without hurting any feelings. But I think that a definite statement of our position is going to be inevitable.

I finally eeked out a free afternoon to shop. What a wonderful feeling to browse around again, looking and buying—but mostly looking. I guess a shopping spree is part of a woman's nature. The fatal phase of it here is that though we know the value of Indian money in relation to our own, a hundred rupee bill (\$50) seems like so much paper.

2

Wft—ssaht—wheee—it's gone! Kashmir wool can't be compared to anything we have in the states. It is incredibly soft. Wool isn't the type of material you would describe as delicate but this really is. Embroidered tablecloths of Chinese linen make our lace ones look cheap in comparison. I just haven't felt I could afford \$20 for one. I picked up a few odd pieces of jewelry which in themselves were not attractive but removing the outstanding feature in each and having them set into rings is going to give me something really novel. I am waiting now to see the finished product. I bought a small piece of turquoise from one of the Naga hill people. By appearing non interested I finally zoomed him down from \$6 to \$.30. If I can have it smoothed into shape it will make a nice ring setting.

You can purchase precious and semi-precious stones on the open market. This is risky business unless you go with some one who can distinguish a true stone from the imitation. Star sapphires are in abundance, also opals, rubys and synthetic diamonds. The market for good jade was completely swallowed up by the early arrivals and to purchase any now you must go to Burma. I am not toying with the idea of buying any stones until I can shop with someone who is an authority.

I took my first hop in a P.T. today. This is the preliminary training ship for pilots. It's an open two seat job and a grand ship from which to gain a sky view of Assam. On foot this country is a conglomeration—something similar to surrealistic art or a map of New York City's subway system. In the air it organized itself into a nest formula. If you were to open an elementary geometry book to a problem page you couldn't find a more striking resemblance. The tea patches resolve themselves into rectangles and squares; the rice paddies isosceles and equilateral triangles; the mountains obtuse and acute angles; and the Indian huts trapezoids. With modern education absorbing air age techniques, this ~~zzzzzz~~ approach to geometry might move it from the "you gotta" to the "let's take it" subjects.

For much ado about nothing this letter has miraculously extended itself into two pages. My rubber band rant is just about over, with one added note—I'm still physically the "wheatie kid" of the China-India theatre.

Love
"Sev"

Pst: I had dinner with a fellow who went to Hobart and used to date Schultzy. He also climbed the water tower so we had much in common.

ENVELOPE

AIR MAIL

(Sender) Jeanne Severance, 49917 A.R.C.
 Am. Red Cross, A.P.O. 487
 c/o Postmaster, New York City

(Addressee) Misses Connie and Martha Greene
 New town Lane
 E. Hampton, Long Island

(Postmark) Passed by US Army Examiner Base 1850
(Postmark) US. Army Service APO 487 MAR 30 1945

CORRESPONDENCE

March 28th

Hello Greenes

Weary week! In spite of Marcia's and my combined effort to keep the date situation at a low ebb, we found ourselves stuck with a week of seven night stands. I am even more war weary because I have squeezed in two afternoons to boot.

Monday it was dinner at the Lodge across the river. We went over in a speed boat and half way across the bottom dropped out of the heavens. Reaching the lodge we hopped into some of the fellows dry clothes. I had to forsake eloquence with many gestures I was so busy holding up my pants. After expanding on a dinner of chicken, dove, pidgeon and venison I could have been guest conductor of the Boston Symphony with no qualms at all about drawers drooping. On leaving we naively stated that we had just had to put on our pants and go.

The Armed Forces Institute has embarked on an educational program for the fellows who are interested in obtaining highschool or college credits in various subjects. For this purpose the men here have built a classroom naming it Basha University. I am about to become dean of women and take over a typing class in my free time. I hope they are as enthusiastic about it as I am. If I wanted to follow this through it would naturally interfere with my Red Cross work. On inquiry I learned that I might be able to receive a commission in either the Wac's or Waves to do this specific job. I am writing Washington for application to the three months course at Washington and Lee University after which I would be all set. I am trying not to plan too much on a thing which may take months to arrange. Every job I have ever had I have thoroughly enjoyed but somehow others are forever presenting themselves in the light of some new and interesting angle.

The heat grows intense again. Red Cross higher-ups would never sanction the wearing of shorts so we "stick" to our slacks. I think I know how Gretel felt when the old witch was about to shove her into the oven. I continue! We dropped into the bungalow after a long hot run and the only thing in the world that seemed important was getting clean. No water! With our remaining energy we gave the servants hell. At this very moment two men are waiting patiently in the living room for their dinner dates who are flopped on their beds prostrate with rage. These natives have no conception of time. The twenty-four hour division is much too complex so they diminish it to two—day and night. If you order hot water in the morning to wash your hair you may be fortunate to have it at four in the

afternoon. The philosopher who expounds on the complexities of modern living as the cause for all our international disagreements, has never been to India. If the parts of a day are not soon viewed in the more complicated light of morning, noon and afternoon, the Uncle Sugar (United States) part of this bungalow will have violent disagreement with the Indian representatives.

Over here there is much time to think; I guess you can judge that from my letters. I am envied by everyone who writes to me because of my opportunity to travel. I feel as if I should return with something I could not have found at home other than the more vivid experience of acquaintance with customs and people I could have read about in any authentic book in one of our public libraries. It set me to wondering about the true benefits of travel. People have elaborated on travel abroad as educationally advantageous. You dash hither and yon seeing the wonders of the world; looking for a moment at the Big Ben, the throne room of one of history's most celebrated kings and the burial place of great men of literature. Arriving home you have something to talk about and for some unknown reason when the conversation is satiated, the vivid accounts have been told and retold until they are threadbare, people are more impressed with you than ever before—not as it should be through something you have done but with what you have seen. All you have brought them is the brief enchantment of a fairy tale and then as the picture fades a momentary dissatisfaction with their own prosaic existence. But this isn't the

2

answer. Studying the characteristics of other nationalities does give us a greater insight into universal problems. We are inclined to close ourselves off into our own little world and there live happily ever after. But even this isn't it. There seems to be something inspirational in the experience. Nothing over here seems impossible. I am constantly looking back across the ocean, not finding dissatisfaction in things I have done in the past but feeling more daring about what I can do in the future. Inspiration is like moving from a two room flat to more spacious quarters. You breathe deeper—vision is greater to the opposite wall—the windows let in a little more sunlight and suddenly you are uneasy because there you are sitting in the same old chair.

The absence of commercialized recreation throws you back onto your own resources. Without our knowing it these can also disappear under the dust and cobwebs that attach themselves to things long in disuse. Creative thought is necessary to resourcefulness. If you go further and add this to a purpose then travel to another country has been an educational experience. Another thing—I can complete my trip around the world with no expense to myself. I think I can pick up a travel book now and so detach myself as to actually be in that country. I suppose a person with an acute imagination could have done that in the first place but not me!

The part of Assam we are in is not naturally scenic but the tea plantations in the early morning really carry me away. Trees with a silvery gray bark are planted throughout these tea patches to replenish the soil with some mineral displaced by the plant. There is no foliage on their branches and they stand gaunt and gray like the trees in a late autumn wood. A reminder of ~~the~~ any one of the separate beauties of our four seasons is refreshing in a sphere that has but two, wet and dry. Even on the runway there is artistry. A silver plane taxing down the runway on a bright night looks amazingly like moonlight on still water. The little things here are satisfying, the sudden blossoming of a burnt orange flower against the drab background of a dust laden countryside; the sun catching the brilliant plumage of a blue headed rock thrush; the restful rhythm of the coolie padding in the roadside, a pole across his shoulders with great bundles of fire wood balanced on either end. But I defy the naturalist who calls

that damned jade green katydid in our bathtub exquisite. Humph! The paltry poetry in pelfry (coined one) will never recognize the bug beautiful. It seems I inserted something similar to this in my last letter the way I feel about it, it will probably be in my next. Until then---

Love
Sev

Pst: Mart your letter was wonderful. I don't know anyone who has as swell a job as your own.

Pst. Again Mrs. Green, your newspaper clipping was well placed, coming back about fifty miles would hit the nail on the head.

3

Connie, I had a real newsy note from the Archers. Mr. Archer cedes his proverbial duties to a new faculty member and is taking over the position of Business Manager. They are thrilled with the change.

CORRESPONDENCE

April 6th

We have been here long enough now for people to recover from the novelty of two more women in a destitute theatre and begin the normal routine of criticism. Marcia and I have become quite popular in a conservative way and have made some really wonderful friends. Once this occurs, you must expect criticism. The usual point around which it centers is women are rank conscious. We have never dated individually either officers or enlisted men in the unit to which we're attached. That clears us there. It leaves the caustic critic to his own resources—he must invent something. I've mentioned it before-- we serve more colored men than we do white. It has been hard sometimes to treat them as we do everyone else but the fact remains the Red Cross is an international organization, our branch of it is service to the armed forces and color has nothing to do with it. As of yesterday Marcia and I were accused of being too familiar with the colored men. We are known as "their girls". No one would dare say this to us. As always, the source crops up sooner or later. It was a colonel we refused to date and a group from the deep south. I want to tell you Jeanne Mallory blew her top. We eat all our meals at the officers club so before dinner I joined the usual gang of men with the usual can of beer. I told them we had just received that particular criticism from their group and that no man no matter what his rank or position would dictate to me my attitude on the racial question. I wasn't going to have someones sectional prejudice pawned off on me. The man who wouldn't face the parties directly concerned, by doing so admitted his own feeble accusation. A captain from Mississippi stuck his neck out and mumbled something about we were all living in a community and the moral level had to be maintained. I told him that unfounded accusation concerning a persons moral character was a court martial offense but it would be more constructive if he just reread his constitution laboring long over the lines about the equality of man. Nothing more was said. I have learned to take a lot of the armies social and political corruption in silence but when I am pulled into it I just can't keep my mouth shut, which is as always the best thing to do. Now and then people must be reminded that you aren't a mat.

I admit I do have a prejudice against the negroes. They are too emotional about everything. For a people who have no tradition behind them and have been long oppressed I can see where their sensitivity would be natural. This doesn't make them any less of a danger to society. Everyone of these men carry knives. They can crock the most innocent statement into a race discrimination declaration which to them is excuse enough for murder. I'm not just being sensational, this is a fact. Before the peace treaty signatures are dry this problem is going to explode.

All army personnel in this theatre are ordered to take an atabrine tablet daily. It is a preventative for cerebral malaria and is supposed to even eliminate your being flat on your back with a milder case. Some people have returned to the states and having discontinued the atabrine suddenly contracted the disease. It can stay in your blood stream for I believe from two to five years. A mosquito biting a malaria infected person and nipping you will do the mischief. Anyway this little pill gradually turns your skin yellow. We are really beginning to show the effects. So—

When I return think only this of me
My olive complexion is the atabrine you see.

Problems, always problems. The latest is fleas. My ankles are a raw red witness to the fact that I am carrying them around with me. At first I blamed it on Annie (mosquito) but when I saw what I

thought was a freckle on my arm hop, I decided then and there to either change the brand of my beer or reach for a spray gun.

Not to make you envious in any way, but I attended a tea dance Sunday afternoon at which each girl was presented with an orchid. This is the country for them.

I have hinted at heat before but then I knew nothing about it. Where once I was all eagered up about seeing and learning as much as I could about this country, I am now listless. I'm so hot I haven't the strength to think much less move. There is no longer relief at night. The mosquito nets we sleep under are so fine that even air can't seep through. The discouraging part about this is that it grows twice as intense. It is a wonder to me that these people have progressed as far as they have in such extremes of climate. I can remember in my Economic Geography classes discussing the evidence that the majority of the great things in science, music, art and all were realized in a temperate climate. I was reading the prediction of some scientist in the late eighteen hundreds that with the wonders now performed in engineering the Bering Straight could be dumped someplace else making regions of Alaska and Siberia livable and productive, opening an entirely new pioneer playground. Geography surely is a fascinating subject. When you read about future progress you almost want to grow old.

Getting back to the subject of heat I decided to try out that adage "mind over matter". I signed at Special Service for the book The Alure of Alaska. With beads of perspiration splotched all over my forehead and breaking into streams —fur best suited for parkas, men freezing to death. It just wasn't working. Then I came across the comical fact that chickens were hard to raise in Alaska because they walked themselves to death in the long summer days. I hooted. In that instance I forgot the heat. Which proves a lot of — I'm not sure what. If I come home a laughing hyena you can credit me with a mental monsoon victory.

So ends my catalogue of distant things.

Love
"Sev"

ENVELOPE

AIR MAIL

(Sender) Jeanne Severance, 49917
 Am. Red Cross, A.P.O. 487
 c/o Postmaster, New York City

(Addressee) The Greene Family
 New town Lane
 E. Hampton, Long Island

(Postmark) Passed by US Army Examiner Base 1857
(Postmark) US. Army Service APO 487 April 12 1945

CORRESPONDENCEApril 11th—still fighting the battle of AssamCheerio Greenes

The war rages on! Tactics haven't changed a bit for we're still firing coffee and doughnuts at the front. With an army full of grippers glorious our ammunition very seldom "hits the spot". It took a month or three but Marcia and I have them so drilled now that even if they gag on it they say, "Vey good this morning."

A new girls has arrived to assist in one of our Red Cross Clubs, so she moves in with us. Something fresh from Uncle Sugar is always termed a rookie. This is the "rookie really". If you can visualize a very efficient teacher of languages peering intensely through glasses which she misplaces daily, you can say you know Charlotte Basely from Cleveland. She was extremely put out that no one was informed of her arrival weeks in advance. The bed which I have once described as wicker strips across a wooden frame wasn't at all safe. Why didn't someone make it a point to awaken her so she could get to work on time. While one of the girls is entertaining a date in the living room, Charlotte gathers her writing materials in hand, proceeds to the same room and flounces (she does just that) into a nearby easy chair, keeping the couple company while she communes with friends overseas. We are all on different schedules here. We've had to adjust to many inconveniences one—which we were thoroughly informed the very minute we tried to get into Red Cross. She is not being a bit sensible about dating which is already a drain on her physically and she is about to nosedive into the position of a very unhappy person. We can't seem to convince her that Assam is not Ohio, nor the people. It is hard to believe that a college graduate having reached twenty-seven has not as yet acquired a certain amount of poise, discipline, sensibility and humerous outlook on life. A college like Keuka (Xeuka?) would have made her. Plug!

Today at high noon, the temperature a high eighty, the Severances little girl Jeanne was wiping frost from the lense of her sun glasses. Amazing! I had just shivered my way out of a frefrigerated room 110° in any spot. After a glob of vanilla ice cream I was all primed for another chapter in Alure of Alaska. I had misplaced the darned book. The only thing left to do was marvel at my ability to shiver and simmer at the same time. Barnum and Bailey just don't know what they missed all these years.

The hospital unit is a rare sight these days. Men feign illness to escape work – women to encourage attention. Doc Scheer who pretends to fall for the bluffs but doesn't, decided to fix them good. The temperature is right up there. The cycle of headache laments has passed and the fellows are really overdoing the strained muscle symptom. Into casts they all went. Every morning at eight they remove them and do simple exercises for half an hour. Doc says they hop, knee bend and touch hands to toes better than he in the dapper days when he had all his hair. Though the casts itch to distraction the loafers will be ridiculed by every man in their unit if they back out now. They'll be ridiculed anyway for someone took a snapshot of them and is going to enter it in a photo contest entitling it, "Action at the Front".

One of the hard boiled officers bought a baby leopard and is being a perfect fool about her. It may be a baby to Mama Spot but it sure looks like an outsize to me. The Duchesses skin would trim a cloth coat and still leave enough for a hat to match. She is growing ugly because the men play too roughly with her. In another month she will probably have to be shot. I'd sure like to buy that skin. Gray leopard which is very rare, is sold here at amazingly reasonable prices. I believe there is a whole coat of it in one of the nearby towns on sale for \$180. Originally

2

I came here to save money but such temptations are too great. With me it doesn't have to be more than the faintest whisper of one, I succumb.

Spring in Assam! The flora here is lovely. Its brilliance seems much more startling than our own. It may be because I never looked. Sometimes the best way to learn about your own country is to visit another. Being a little more observant today I found also soft shades of pastel even on the blossoms of common weeds. The bloom that really catches my fancy is found on large clusters of bushes. If you were to sit in the orchestra pit at the Met and look up at Markova spinning in a frothy ballet costume under a scarlet spotlight you'd know this flower. The jungle flowers are too big to be pretty and have straight strong lines with hideous leaf attachments, something like the ones we used to draw in the third grade. Hugging the ground are the more delicate blossoms of wood violet. I have worn orchids here in a corsage but I have yet to see them in their natural habitat. One of the fellows cut us a sprig. A week later he gave it to us and it was just as fresh as if it had been cut yesterday.

Jo Henry, a club girl, collects all kinds of plants and sends them to her mother who is quite an authority in botanic circles. Jo is another person you might read about in a career story in Mademoiselle. She is extremely wealthy. Before entering the Red Cross she had never worked a day of her life. She has traveled all over the world and is an authority on almost any subject you can suggest. She paints, writes, designs. Long used to Boston society the often unintentional vulgarity of men over here disgusts her. It is amazing how well she has adjusted in spite of it. Naturally she is thoroughly disliked for the fellows have tagged her the intellectual type.

The things you learn about in a man's world are incredible. It is not uncommon for enlisted men to drive into a nearby town, purchase an Indian girl for the equivalent of \$3 and sneak her into a Basha back in the woods adjacent to their camp. There she stays as long as she remains undiscovered. Food and blankets are swiped for her and in spite of the moral degradation she has probably never lived better in her life. A fellow new to the theatre was prowling around an Indian village one night looking for a woman. He was not so successful. The following morning they found him with his ears cut off and

his eyes gouged out. The natives around here are peace loving country folk but anyone who dares force entrance into their home takes his life in his own hands. Even the very small boys carry large highly sharpened knives which they handle with great dexterity. I had begun to think I was shock proof after all this but the crowning incident came to my attention yesterday. Two of the men in the unit to which we are attached were caught with an Indian girl of sixteen. She had leprosy. They are now forbidden to leave the country for seven years. At the end of this time if they have not contracted the disease they can be admitted in the States. Leprosy has been known to crop up even twenty years later. Imagine a woman at home marrying one of these fellows unsuspectingly. I am thinking seriously of a career but it isn't because I've lost my faith in human nature.

The latest are lizards. They are overgrown salamanders from three to four inches in length—that includes the tail. Almost any night you can look up on your wall and find one scooting about. No matter how low the form of animal life there is always some means of survival. Izzie Lizard can almost outrun my eye and she has the power of taking on the color of her background. One of the Izzies is there on our yellow wall now. If I hadn't seen her move I would have thought she was just a painters carelessness. I am drawn to her for she exists on bugs. I will never, never kill an Izzie.

Paper's a waiting – Love Sev

3

Pst: Mrs Green, I've been in the P. T. you sent the clipping about.

Mart your letters are great.

Dr. Boogle seems to be running true to form. I suppose I'd better get a bed ready and an available jeep just in case she drops into this theatre. I had a new long letter from Toni. Morse. Chum Cargill wrote that she and son Tim and son and Schultzie and son are going to spend a weekend together at Schultzie's. I sure wish I could be there – it would make a riotous subject for a dime novel. I'm very proud of myself. I just sent a hundred dollars home to go toward my year of graduate work at Syracuse.

CORRESPONDENCE

April 16th

We are all under observation. One of our bungalow bedfellows splashed out with measles. If you don't receive my weekly letter you'll know I have been strapped into a bed for two weeks wearing a pair of dark glasses and being forbidden reading and writing materials. With an eye to the future I am memorizing all the songs I know so the least I can do is yodel to myself. I'm just no good at finger twiddling.

A fellow here is not expected to survive the injuries of a man eating tiger which walked into his Basha one night and attacked him in bed. They say he is terribly chewed up. Maybe one out of every thousand cats becomes a man eater. Here the percentage has risen because the fellows have been hunting them with ammunition impotent for anything but a vital shot. A wound merely stiffens the creature, slowing him down so that he cannot catch his usual jungle fare. Rather than starve to death he becomes a man eater. As far as this chunk of white meat is concerned the war department won't have to "regret to inform you" because we live in a bungalow and there are three doors between me and a dark night.

Caste is one of Hinduism's outstanding institutions. The division of society into distinct social groups has done as much to create a separatist feeling as the mountains did for the Greeks. There are four main social divisions with the Brahmins who comprise the priests, administrators and teachers forming the upper crust. Next come the Kahatriyas, the warrior caste; then the Vaisyas, who are merchants and traders and finally the Sudras, who serve the other three castes. Outside the four walls of the Hindu caste system are sects known as the Untouchables. They are pitifully poor and look more like animals than human beings. In rural villages the section in which the Untouchables live is set off several hundred yards from the rest of the houses. In first coming to India the caste system is the introductory "thumbs down" in this country. You get to thinking about it and outside of the fact that there is a rigid code of conduct in each of these divisions it is duplicated in a milder form in our country. The Brahmins—our upper income group; the Kahatriyas—our armed forces; the Vaisyas—our middle class; the Sudra—our poor class who fill such positions as maids, waitresses etc. The Untouchables would be comparable to our slum population. Here in our bungalow the water carrier (ponnywalla) just lugs water and sits on his fanny the rest of the day. It was a pitched battle to get him to clean the ash trays. The head bearer sees that everything is done but doesn't do it. The sweeper keeps the floors clean, period. Caste system—nuts; it's a regular racket!!

Last night I was really breathless. For two hours this corner of Assam blazed and blacked out in the most beautiful electric storm I have ever seen. There was no clap and clatter of thunder, just a heavy silence enveloping everything. All the stars were out. From deep down beyond the horizon great flashes of light flared up into the heavens, on and off again like a Neon sign. It made me think of a two act drama depicting the beginning and end of things—a sudden revelation, blue white as the shades of an early morning sky and then darkness to break it up into a million little stars like memories studding the past. Vast brilliance fading out to a tiny twinkle each possessing a solitary beauty of its own. I believe life is the shadow of the elements, nature's spatterprint in which even a flash of lightning and a star has its lesson. No matter how great or small the light in your life may be, it can be equally inspiring. Thinking about these things, just the ordinary person I am, I sometimes laugh at myself but I believe them. No benediction!

I can't resist this joke about the little moron. He was watching an obstretition bring a baby into the world. Just after it was born, the doctor turned it over and gave it the usual spank. The little moron nodded and mumbled, "Serves him right for crawling up there."

The presidents death—stunned us all. Parties, dances and social gatherings have been cancelled for thirty days of official mourning. I can't imagine Truman in the White House. He was "yes man" to Pendergast of Kansas City, which is probably one of the biggest party machine man of any city in the country. (Undecipherable) in Jersey and Albany's IS I've forgotten his name, are second rate in comparison. Pendergast is serving a penitentiary sentence now and Truman himself barely escaped being dragged into the mess. Of course since he has done a real clean up job on the (Undecipherable) Committee and his record as a Senator seems to have been good. Here's hoping he works out.

I met a fellow who would qualify for "The Most Unforgettable Character I have Ever Met" column in Reader's Digest. We had dinner at The Shack again last night, the quarters for officers of an engineering unit there in the jungle. Dusty is their new C.O., a tall lanky westerner if there ever was one. He has a lazy melodious drawl. If you could hop to a typewriter and record an ordinary conversation of his it would read back natural poetry. I was spellbound listening to him tell of his life on the range, sunsets, purple hills and long stretches of grass land. In grade school I loved Zane Gray's characters in Thundering Herd and its sequel Rainbow Trail but I never expected to meet one.

Flying weather has been bad this past month. One morning pilots are grouped about the Clubmobile kidding about the punk coffee and the punker doughnuts and the next they are dead. We stopped in to see a young kid of twenty who bailed out in a mid-air crash. His leg was severed at the knee. He said he actually debated whether to pull the rip cord. He was in wonderful spirits. After leaving him, I was a pretty quiet kid for a while.

The water situation has been at the thimble level again all week. We dunk our big toes and cuss the army pump. I threaten the ponywalla with a horrible end every hair washing day and evidently I have been sufficiently vehement so far. Never underestimate the luxury of a bath.

Sit and soak for me—
"Sev"

Handwritten: PST: I had a grand letter from Patty Hunt. She finishes up her graduate work at Columbia this summer and will live at International House. I'm sure glad she's pulling out of her teaching rut.

The clipping is for you Connie – out of one of the Keukonians. Boy does that ever take me back.

Mart, a young kid I met over here is going home to New York City in another month. I asked him to call you and gab for a moment. I figured Connie wouldn't be accessible with all her conferences about the wee folk.

Mrs. Green I could go home of your tapioca "rice pudding!"

ENVELOPE

AIR MAIL

(Sender) Jeanne Severance, 49917
 Am. Red Cross, A.P.O. 487
 c/o Postmaster, New York City

(Addressee) The Greene Family
 New town Lane
 E. Hampton, Long Island

(Postmark) Passed by US Army Examiner Base 850
(Postmark) US. Army Service APO 487 April 26 1945 487

J. Severance A.R.C.

CORRESPONDENCEApril 25thDear Greenes

Whew! Hell is a haven in comparison to this Assamese sun. According to science the larger bodies in the universe attract the smaller; drop a pin and it falls to the ground. In like manner the planets group around the sun. But this body is the exception. I'm just not drawn to it. I am much more interested in the theory bodies take the path of least resistance. How true! Me too!

Marcia and I have confiscated some parachute pieces and are having the dursy (tailor) MAKE (mistake) nylon underwear for us. This life is alternately a luxury and an inconvenience. One bra costs the magnificent sum of sixty cents. At that rate I'd sure like to supply a lingerie shop in the states. You could be sure of a profit of \$2.10 per. A slip would probably cost \$1 in the making over here and being nylon could sell for \$5 at home. One hundred slips would net \$400. If I had the Jewish gold stream instead of red blood in my veins I could make a fortune as an aside. And so the fairy prince kissed the sleeping beauty "hello" and woke her from her dream of a century. Pop, the bubble!

Rumors; fantastic and exhilarating. The army is a breeding ground for them. They usually die out in a day but things have been building up to a white heat here. Now it's China, Russia or Siberia. Take your pick. I have a feeling we're going to move but it's just a feeling. Red Cross girls keep piling into Bombay. Marcia and I are hoping that if they move anyone they'll take we veterans and give the rookies the soft seats. This magic carpet career gets into your system and you want to wander about and see all the countries in the world before you reach home. Maybe there was an old sea captain perched on one of the limbs of our family tree. Nevertheless, a trip to Russia would be wonderful. I have just finished Maurice Hindus' book Mother Russia. It is supposed to be one of the best works about that country. The Five Year Plans though contrary to our capitalistic regime is what carried them through this war. When you read about the sacrifices their women and children alone have made, you mentally try to imagine yourself giving up the same things. I just can't visualize our women doing it. I don't think I could. Regardless of our governmental differences I can't see Russia and America ever declaring war upon one another. It is absurd to think it. I don't like to take just one authors opinion on

a subject so I checked Hindus' against a political science text This Age of Conflict and a few other sources and the facts are identical.

The Indians are whooping it up again. I think this time it's a wedding. The other morning at the weary hour of two they fan-fared out in our back yard - - much yelling and beating of drums. At home it would have brought out the riot squad but we merely rolled over and let the racket lull us back to sleep. C'est la guere!

They call me the Monte Carlo Kid. Sending a hundred dollars home last month left me nearly a pauper. There were meals, laundry bills and other odd items to be paid. I sunk five rupees into a poker game and finished up with sixty. Starting with another five at the dice tale, I won thirty. A tennis and volleyball game with side bets netted me ten more. My profit for the month totaled forty dollars. My bills are paid and I have five more rupees to start all over again. Seasoned gamblers tell me that you have to have substantial reserve to carry you over that period in the game when your luck breaks. I am inclined to differ. When I lose my five rupee starter I am through for the evening. It is not uncommon to see the equivalent of \$900 change hands in a crap game at the club some nights. The big time doesn't lure me. I am content to play small stakes and reluctant to impose on good fortune.

2

There has been quite an expose down Ledo way. Nurses and Red Cross are placed out of bounds while the colonel conducts an investigation. The girls were running a popular establishment. Some sent home as much as \$600 a month. It is disgusting the number of women who have abandoned their pride and self respect to make a little extra money. The fellows discussed it in a straightforward manner much as they would comment on the weather. Even the married men who aren't interested in any other women but their own, know where to get one if they should change their minds. A man's world startles me every now and then even though I'm not one who believes ignorance is bliss. The Burmese marriage customs have done much to promote American good will in Burma. Girls are slaves to a three year system of trial marriage. Before that time has expired, if a man decides he doesn't want to marry his girl, he pays her father and all is well.

The Clubmobile has been deadlined for three days. What a vacation! Our boss hates to see us get any time off so we just ride him ragged. When he wanted to know why we weren't on the road I told him I wasn't getting enough sack time so I punched a couple holes in the radiator. We remind him frequently that if it weren't for we two gorgeous gals in his life he just wouldn't be worth a damn at his desk. So every morning we peek around the doorway in his office and say, "Look, you lug, and live." His wife just sent him a fancy paper ~~wa~~ weight. This added to his increased proficiency at hurling objects in our direction necessitates our peering in through a screened window these days.

We didn't get measles.

A very dull letter

Love

"Sev"

(Handwritten)

P.S. Connie, I could sure us a small bottle of olive oil.

Also a can of Johnsons Baby Powder.

Kaitie wrote me all about Greggy.

I've been playing a little tennis on a lawn court for the past week and I look like an old woman. I feel worse.

CORRESPONDENCE

May 2nd

A week of rain. The pockets in my clothes are wet. My shoes are damp when I slide into them in the morning. Rubber boots are the order of every day. Coolies who work in the downpour wear these immense coolie hats that seem to be all brim and that we are in the habit of identifying as strictly Chinese. Some take gunny sacks, slit them along a side seam and wear them over their heads with the remainder trailing down their backs. This cowl effect setting off their impassive facial expression could almost qualify them for a monastic order. What tickles Marcia and I is Walt Disney's very near portrayal of coolies filing to work in the early morning hours. They march one behind the other, each with a crude implement thrown over their shoulders. As we drive by them we invariably burst forth with the hit from Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs.

Interesting fact of the week: Frank Buck, renowned big game hunter caught his largest cats in this vicinity.

Comment: Wow!

I have just finished an abridged and simplified edition of John Bunyan's classic Pilgrim's Progress. Without omitting any of the better known incidents the author cuts the story to less than 1/5 its original length. I never suffered pangs of remorse or shame when posed with the "And you have never read Pilgrim's Progress?" Grown ups can fashion their own fiction and learn their object lessons from the people around them. But a child who doesn't read Raggedy Ann and Raggedy Andy, to me is unformed. There is a girl here who reads because other people are doing it. She thinks, therefore, she should. The best seller list in the New York Times leaves her aghast at the unfamiliarity of the titles listed there. What a hell of a time people have trying to keep up with the Joneses.

[Removed by censor]

We have adopted the cuddliest kitten! Smootchie looks like a rabbit on top and tiger underneath. He thinks he's a great hunter and stalks moths by night and my big toe by day. It takes me back this playing hide and seek behind the ~~the~~ big chair. No one was paying the slightest attention to Smootchie's corner consciousness. Everytime he got that look between his whiskers I dumped him in his sand box. Having majored in education I taught the complete course in two easy lessons. I impressed this fact upon the other members of the household and suggested that since I had saved them what would have been the task of a fortnight, I felt I deserved some slight reward. I am now, by virtue of my virtue, custodian of this sand box. I have affixed to the box the following semi-~~O~~original inscription:

To Smootchie—

Little drops of water
Little grains of sand
Make me eager for the day
You've grown to be a man.

And on the side he jumps out—

'F you're a normal cat with nine lives
No doubt you are you little fox
I've a fellow feeling for the other eight
Who have to dump the box.

I'm going to compose a childrens story and call it Feline Belly or the Cat's Meow.

2

Don't miss next week and the first installment. Those of you who haven't children, hurry up with the idea—do something about it so I'll have a market for my material.

Our Memorial Services were held in the little cemetary down the road. It is as pretty a spot as you could find at home—beautifully landscaped; a gay green lawn close cropped; a bed of flowers circling the flat staff and others bordering the path. On each of the little white crosses is affixed the identification tag worn by the dead soldiers. The atmosphere here called for a simple inspiring ceremony that seems to go with the dreamy church spires of a small town. Unfortunately it was not. The service was conducted by a group of the "hell fire and damnation" preachers, echoes of the Billy Sunday era. I'm sure they were sincere but seemed almost a desecration in that lovely spot.

Last night I served one of the bitterest men I have ever met. He hated every one and everything, himself no exception. His term overseas has been a long one. He began drinking and as a result of one of the many nights of debauchery was imprisoned eight months for attempted murner. My first reaction to him was one of utter disgust and abhorance but my second was that if just three people believed in him it might make a man of him again.

Me, I'm fine!

Love
Sev

HANDWRITTEN: P.S. Con, I'd sure like to have made graduation at Keuka this year. The tail end of the gang we know are leaving. This is the moment you really become an alumna.

CORRESPONDENCE

May 5th

Lo Greenes

I'm late on my letter this time. Slipped up—and will probably do it again.

We've met some of the grandest men since we came here. I just drove home with a "Tinker" Moody. He's the Virginian you read about in stories of the old Southern aristocrats. I can see him in a palm beach suit sitting on the porch of a colonial style mansion, sipping mint juleps and talking horses and fox haunts. Southern hospitality is as much a part of him as his name. He is long and rangey, the right fit for a horse "with his hounds and horns in the mornings! If I called him this very minute and asked for a hundred dollar loan he'd have it. He is the same with animals. When his horses are no longer good for riding purposes they are set out to pasture and cared for the rest of their lives. When a hound is too old to keep up with the pack it receives the same treatment. It is amazing that when you really stop to look at people almost everyone fits into a story book. Sometimes I think all fiction is biography.

Supplies have dwindled to a point below the line of bare necessity. For the past two days we have been "grounded". It might mean our setting up a temporary club in one of the near by staging areas. This is a transient camp where troops stop over either on their way home or en route to forward areas. Last week we served an enormous number just back from China on their way home. They weren't rear line commandos, they fired the guns. They had all been embibing in Hayward gin. It wasn't an individual project but a mass movement. For two hours we served coffee and cruellers to rioters that would make the racket at Madison Squares Garden's national championship boxing bout sound like a stage whisper. One of the more daring drunks hopped up into the clubmobile. When I suggested he leave he threatened me with one of our metal dippers. Now I am a peaceful woman by nature but the Irish will out. So did he. I placed my foot in the middle of his back and shoved. To repel any counter attack I filled a cup with boiling coffee and asked him if he'd like it drop by drop or all at once. Woman again triumphed!

I met the man marvel; a Yale graduate, sportsman, humorist and all these added characteristics that make the ideas of a career a memory. We tennised, cheesed, beered, dined and bantered. Ah love! Then he showed me the baby pictures. Deciding against despondency I pledged myself each year at this time to drop a tear in a beer in memoriam.

I have made just the littlest bit of progress over my bug phobia. Now I give them the brush off and then scream. Before, I just screamed. A pictorial review of my specialities:

Hand drawn illustrations – shellback

Hand drawn illustrationLong fellow

A dotflea

Hand drawn illustration....B 29

Hand drawn illustration....unidentified

After an hours meditation on the same I concluded I could foment a friendly feeling for the world of insects if they would conform to my pattern of what the divine bug should be:

Take the light of the firefly

The chirp of the cricket
The size of a gnat
The color of a kattydid
And the let live nature of the ladybug who is eternally hurrying away
because her house is afire

BUT until the year 2000 when this dream emerges into a reality, "Quick Henry, the insecticide."

Lizards exist on bugs. To encourage migration to our bungalow I have lovingly left crumbs of bread and sweets about. Now they are so bloated with my tidbits that they don't have room for the insects. This has become my bugaboo. Any ideas as to luring lizards with empty stomachs would be greatly appreciated.

If Marcia and I were ordered to pack up and move tomorrow we would need a semi-trailer to tote all our possessions. I don't want to flaunt rationed food under your nose but our case of tuna fish couldn't be left behind, nor our boned turkey or case of toddy or fruit juice or beer. There are some odds and ends in the form of boxes of candy bars, gum, cartons of cigarettes, quarts of Lord Calverts and four reams of air mail paper. The statistics on raketeers will double after this war. Who knows I may be one of the digits.

My reading course in political science and literary men, these were the two I selected for this month, made way for the tennis racket. But today it is clammy cold and a steady drizzle blurs the windows. I feel extremely studious as I'm going to prep up in bed with a can of peanuts, Whitmans chocolates, a cigarettes and my two texts. If all the days were bright I would be an extremely uninformed person but give me a week of rain and I can tell you all about the Atlantic Charter, Boccaccio who thought there was nothing in the world more amusing than a good love story, the League of Nations, the World Court, and Sir Walter Scott who fell in love with a girl who refused to marry him—and married a girl who refused to love him. The Monsoon is about to give birth to a genius.

Probably the first thing you learn about the Indians is that though they are divided on religious questions they are bound together in their universal excuse for time off. When they get the urge to take a vacation from their duties, which is often, they ox cart to a nearby big town and proceed to a long low building where the civic matters of the community are transacted. Here on benches sit the scribes. From dawn to dusk they write flowery stilted letters for the illiterate and most of them deal with humble requests to the honorable men sahibs for a seven day ritual over the death of their esteemed father. Reviewing our file of notes here at the bungalow our bearer must be an orphan by now. In fact his father is outrivaling the reputation of the cat which has nine lives.

With the coming of heat and unbearable afternoons we have rescheduled our runs. Arising and groping around at 6:30 we work until 11:00. The afternoon is cleared for Indian siesta. Everything else is jammed into the evening activities. All would be ideal except that I am playing six sets of tennis every afternoon. I'm brown as a berry. P.S. I ache all over. But it's a wonderful feeling to creak into bed in the frame of mind that doesn't need the "now I lay me's" but naturally thanks God for man and his inventiness. Ah bed. Having a one track mind I'm off to assume the horizontal.

Snaugh (That's what a snore should look like)

Bzzzzz Bzzzzz

"Sev"

ENVELOPE

AIR MAIL

(Sender) Jeanne Severance, 49917
 Am. Red Cross, A.P.O. 487
 c/o Postmaster, New York City

(Addressee) The Greene Family
 Newtown Lane
 E. Hampton, Long Island

(Postmark) US. Army Service APO 487 May 18 1945 487

CORRESPONDENCEMay 17th'Lo Greenes

Our social life is one big "dress and dash to another one". The officers in one of the fighter groups turned all their staff cars over to the enlisted men for a dance. I felt really hoy polloy zooming along in the commanding officers stateside limosene. Fellows come out every afternoon to play tennis. We forget who we've asked and eight and ten show up at once. I am getting some tennis pointers from Al Barros, state champion of Rhode Island and Ernie Romero, traveling interpreter for Sigura, the Cuban star. If I could have two weeks training with each of these men I think I could play a corker of a game. The new chaplan on the base is even coming out. I told him he'd throw my game all off because of the frustration which would result in my having to think a "damn" when I flubbed a good shot.

One of the bearers at the club caused practically a minor riot. The Indians who work there are quartered in a tent area set aside especially for them. Yesterday morning they all came dashing into the canteen manager and said they had been kept awake every night for the past week by a mad bearer. He prowls around at a wee hour to inform them that they are having a meeting at which he, as head speaker, jabbars far into the night. The others said they weren't supermen. They couldn't stay awake nights and work days. The mad man was told to pick up his back pay and leave. But it wasn't as simple as all that. Before we knew what had happened he lay flat on the floor in prostrate resistance. Whenever a native approached him he would scream himself hoarse. When a man puts up a fight you can hit back but when he lies down, then what? I think Ghandi was the proponent of pacifistic resistance over here. More often his followers lost sight of the pacifist particulars and reverted to common street riots. I remember when he toured the states. The whole country talked of nothing but the shriveled little man in the white sheet. His countrymen have variously described him as the greatest man since Buddha' and 'an astute politician psoing as a saint'. We Americans leaned to the former statement and began talking of awaraj, Indian independence from the British Crown. We were incensed. And then again not too long ago Madame Chiang, speaking from the chapel of her alma mater whipped us into another frenzy---a beautifully modulated voice, a studied speech and Chinese War Relief boomed. I was thoroughly impressed then. Now I wouldn't contribute one penny to their plight. Exactly twenty-five percent of all the equipment we send them arrives at its proper destination. The other $\frac{3}{4}$ are hidden in the hills awaiting the outbreak of the revolution. I should imagine that since we can now concentrate all our efforts on Japan, it will provide them their opportunity to revolt. Freedom

of the press becomes a farce when we are kept in the dark as to the true situation in China. Probably the Stilwell deposition couldn't stand an expose---vague explanations but no real facts.

There are little battle grounds all over the place. Newspapers, magazines and even college courses are headlining peace programs. In a psychology course at Columbia I vaguely remember that certain desires can be traced back to an unfulfilled need in childhood. Jouncing about on the clubmobile there is much time for thinking so I mulled over what peace basically was and how many times I had experienced the feeling. I hadn't realized it was such a rare quality. It is cocooned in happiness which might be the explanation. I can remember six specific instances in my life when I experienced true happiness, one in particular. I was a camp councilor at Green Lake, set heart and soul on being a good one. My kids

2

had fun but were disciplined in lines of courtesy, promptness and adherence to camp regulations. One day I and two of the outstanding girls in my group clashed. It was the third time they had committed the same offense and so I meted out the proper discipline. It didn't take. Resentment resulted. They were grand kids, experiencing a few growing pains and being leaders they dragged their whole gang into it. In devious ways they succeeded in making me miserable. Sometimes you just can't rise above the little hurts. The following week with an influx of new campers my entire unit moved up one and I took over the youngest group. Their new councilors were pretty lax and this gave them an added opportunity to conduct their down with Severance campaign. My new tots were darlings. I decided to experiment with choral verse. They were crazy about it. One evening we took over an entire campfire program at which they presented the selections they had rehearsed for weeks. It really was impressive and the rest of the camp loved it. My kids being the tiniest were about to burst with pride for having made one of the biggest creative contributions of the summer. As a treat that night after everyone had gone to bed, they were allowed to creep out and serenade each of the units. This was a lark for only the big girls stayed up late. The last unit to be serenaded was that in which was centered the open rebellion against me. Of course none of their councilors were on duty and pandemonium was breaking loose. I dreaded the ordeal. We gathered as quiet as mice under the big oak tree near their tents and began to sing. My name was mentioned a few times and then complete silence. The kids were in good voice having practiced up on the other two units. The answering from the listeners spoke their appreciation. When they had finished the closing lullabye I shoed them along to the unit, lingering behind for a moment to enjoy the night. It had been a triumphant day as far as achievement was concerned and I wondered why having put so much energy into a successful endeavor I didn't sense any of the usual enjoyment that follows. The underground movement had really gotten me down. Suddenly without warning the two leaders appeared from behind the bushes on either side of me. Taking me by the hand they walked back to my tent with me. I couldn't speak nor did they. As they left they said I was swell, squeezed my hand and disappeared in the darkness. In that instant I was truly happy, at peace with everything. Such a simple thing. Imagine five other equally satisfying moments of this kind and you could almost say that a person had had a rich life. But how in hell can we ever settle on the world peace they are propagandizing us for if in a single lifetime people can number on their hands the completely peaceful moments they have know? Anyway, "Ain't life grand!"

There is a civil war fomenting right here in our bungalow. Nights have been catagoried into enlisted mens and officers evenings. Thursday is no date day. Everyone is to come home and crawl into bed very quietly. Someone decorated the plaque over the fireplace with that homey inscription, "Be it ever so ~~xxxxxx~~ humble..." etc! When the girls arrive home tonight Marcia and I are due for a good

laugh for we climbed onto a chair and put a big red line through the word "home". Our humor sometimes meets an unappreciative audience but we got a big bang out of it. Finish---

Love

"Sev"

CORRESPONDENCE

May 25th

'Lo Greenes

Happy day! The clubmobile has been repainted fire engine red and dawn grey. Our extended vacation is at an end. At the time I feel as if I'd be perfectly satisfied loafing for the rest of my life. I'll bet I have potentialities for making one of the most constructive doodlers of all time. I used to move like a streak of lightening—the "do it now" stuff but in a tropical climate you just have to slow down. They warned me about this but Jeanne Mallory has to get burned. I played tennis in the broiling sun (silly girl) and then dressed hurriedly to go out for a venison dinner. Before eating we had iced drinks of fruit juice. As we sat down to dinner I suddenly felt as if I should lie down, but quick. Things began spinning, my ear drums burned and I managed to stagger to the nearest bed. In an hour I was O.K. No more tennis and iced drinks mid-day. Even thinking becomes an effort in this heat. I know now why the southerners drawl, the physical advantages of a temperate climate and why inhabitants of the South Sea Islands became habitual drunkards. Food looses its appeal. You can't seem to get enough liquid nourishment. My pill routine of atabrine and vitamins goes up a notch to include salt tablets. Don't think I've developed into a hilarious hypochondriac. Holding on to that rosey cheeked look is a big job now.

One of the colored fellows here attacked an Indian girl. According to custom she is an outcast until vengeance is meted out. With this in mind, the men of the family went into motion. They were unable to track down the guilty man and so enraged, they killed two innocent negroes.

I've been reading about World War I as a background to a little study of our present age of conflict. Oh, I was going to be so ambitious about it all. I became lost in a tangle of treaties. Each country promises to protect the other from aggressors—tissue paper agreements which ignite at the faintest flare of heated controversy. Archduke Ferdinand, an obscure sovereign, is assassinated—loses his identity as a man and becomes a cause. In the ensuing interval the Gallup Poll of the day lines up the pro's, con's and maybe's. At the "get set—go" moment Germany jumps the gun to declare war on Russia. Bullets fly; the Cunard liner Lusitania nose dives into its Davy Jones heaven and America begins humming "Over There". I pause now for breath having just battled my way through the peace terms. So there you have short hand notes from 446 pages of fine print. Too bad they can't put a touch of Treasure Island in history text books. You could absorb it all as children in bedtime stories. Interest would be no problem because there is nothing quite as persistent as a child who doesn't want to go to sleep ---enthusiastic for any alternative! I do remember me tucked in under a patch work quilt listening to the adventures of Tom Swift read to the tune of the creak in my grandmothers ladder backed rocker. About thirty minutes and my eyes would click shut much like the dolls with the automatic lids. Thirty minutes of exhilarating lecture from a history prof is about all you'd get in one class period anyway. I'm all for starting a movement to history-coat the bedtime story. It's easy now for me to suggest this having met Uncle Wiggle of the Cabbage Patch, Wendy, Old Round Red Mr. Sun and all the others parading across my counterpane. Mr. Anthony, our problem is, "Should the younger generation think more or dream more?"

I have begun application for transfer to China. I hope to see another country before this war zips itself into the home stretch. Besides I want to be accessible to Russia when my orders read "That is all!" Disguised in my babushka I think I could pose as the wholesome peasant type and snoop into Russian politics. The other prerequisites I tag Russian are the ability to burst into a vigorous rendition of Aynk nyam (my phoenitic version) and to gulp vodka without getting teary eyed. Of these I think the latter would prove most troublesome but I understand that one of the ingredients of vodka has been diverted to the production of explosives—result, a liquor lack. So the problem isn't a problem at all. No Red is going to serve his precious vodka to someone who gags as they gulp. Russia, here I come! This entire paragraph is good for two things, it is explanatory of what runs through the mind of a potential Section Eighter (not house dept. in the army) and it reads better than a blank space.

Work is twenty-five minutes drive from our bungalow. Lingering in bed until six-thirty was like sleeping the day away, so now we rise at six. Orders from our base! We've been having a little trouble with the old boy. I told him that if the Red Cross begrudged my taking out time to eat three meals a day they'd better send for my replacement pronto. All eight of us received one of the nastiest directives I have ever read. It slurred our friends, set up the nights we would be permitted to go out, stated the amount of liquor we were permitted to consume in a month. He said we all had illusions of becoming glamor girls and that probably none of us had more than two dates a week at home, if any. None of us bearing any resemblance to the glamorous type, none of us interested in inbibing beyond the point of a couple beers an evening and all of us over 25 —were thoroughly disgusted with him. The girls got together and fumed among themselves but did nothing about it. I applied for transfer. Sometimes you can't blame a person for doing the things he does when others let him. Silence merely encourages a repeat performance. I think I belong back in the days when Susan B. was sticking her neck out for the rest of her sex. I'd have to have shared soap boxes with her.

I am convinced Marcia is in love. Every day she plays twice over a recording of the following poem but to soft music. You could almost fall in love with a Mr. Hyde listening to it:

Why do I love you?

I love you not only for what you are but for what I am when I am with you.

I love you not only for what you have made of yourself, but for what you are making of me.

I love you for ignoring the possibilities of the fool in me and for laying firm hold on the possibilities of the good in me.

Why do I love you?

I love you for closing your eyes to the dischords in me and for adding to the music in me by worshipful listening.

I love you because you are helping me to make of this lumber of my life not a tavern, but a temple—

And of the words of my every day not a reproach, but a song.

I love you because you have done more than any creed to make me happy.

You have done it without a word, without a touch, without a sign—

You have done it by just being yourself.

Perhaps, after all, that is what love means.

And he isn't a Mr. Hyde! While Marcia wraps her dreams up with hearts and flowers and reads between the lines, I appreciate it for the really lovely poem it is.

That's all, folks

"Sev"

(Handwritten) P.S. Thanks for the clippings and tho (undecipherable) I decided against the Army Educational Institute. Two years regimentation will be enough. I want to live as an individual not en Mass.

CORRESPONDENCE

June 12th

'Lo Greenes

Weather report:

Unfair

Unfit

And unfailing!!

I am experiencing the first prickles of prickly heat. The advertisers of Johnson's Baby Powder, camphor ice, boric powder, Noxema, Ungentine and every other chaffed skin remedy can go hurriedly to hell. Marcia and I were thinking up all kinds of glowing indorsements to send in such as:

"I was a-splotch with prickley heat
But after a pat of Johnson's baby
Powder my prickles unprickled!"
(\$10 please)

Instead we're getting down to scratch and "itching" to annihilate every skin irritation concern we believed in.

The mosquitoes made a landing, air dropping all over my 5'9". I was nearly quarantined for measles but convinced the doc that they were the usual potential malaria mounds.

After dinner this evening we went out on our usual run. Having served the men, the cooks in the outfit invited us to come over to the mess hall for a little surprise. It was a full course dinner party, candle light and all. Our earlier meal was still in the process of digestion but they were bursting so with pride that we just had to force ourselves to eat it. I never thought there would ever come a time when I'd almost choke to death on fillet mignon—there has---I did.

The paradox of the first three paragraphs is, I am still glad I came. (Handwritten in ink using upper case squiggly letters) There's nothing wrong with me!

There have been two replacements here in the last month. One is a cute little blond from Lu'siana (they never recognize the first "l"). Her personality is just as bright as her complexion. She is our first rebel and therefore the brunt of some good natured kidding. The other girl is slightly older and just a little affected. Mr. Meyers, our boss, told Marcia and I that after our leaves, the end of August and first of September, we will probably be transferred to Ledo to run between there and Burma.

My economic geography work is going to come to a standstill for lack of reference material. The chaplain highly approved my chapter on the affect of geography on religious beliefs. He gave me the idea for a kind of vice versa chapter—religion and its influence on economic geography. Another idea is always a little harder to work out than your own but I dood it. I started out with the Crusades and the opening of new trade routes; then Columbus and how faith in his enterprise overcame a superstitious crew that believed their ships would sail off the edge of the world or be devoured by sea monsters, and the subjequent development of a new land; colonization by the pilgrims in search of a land where they could worship as they wished; continued religious persecution driving the Mormons to the valley of the

Salt Lake where they built a garden from a desert; and the Franciscans, Father Serra who brought the beginnings of the great "mission system" and actually founded California, neglected as inaccessible for 200 years.

I am now trying to work out the influence of geography on literature. That strikes me as a fascinating angle. I may get away from the text book idea after all, for I can't bring myself to working out units on population, commerce and industry. It has all been said so many times.

Two winged beasts set me flying out of the clubmobile the other night. There is something prehistoric about those darned things. Marcia was left to carry on with the coffee and doughnuts until the air cleared. What courage!

I'm working on some childrens poetry for a little something different to do. When I complete the collection I'm going to call it Po'mtrys for Little People. I need an illustrator. They are just no good without pictures. I spent twenty minuted yesterday drawing a raggedy ann doll for one of my lines and it doesn't even faintly resemble the one I used to drag around by the foot. I submit to you one of my first:

ONCE UPON A TIME

Climb aboard my magic carpet
Fly to realms of Otherwhere
All the folk of fairy tale
Are hidden there

Goodness there's Pinoccio
Whee, away he goes,
Running like the very wind
To catch up with his nose
Figaro's not far behind
No time to take a bow
He purrs he needn't tell you
That he's the cats meow

Hansel has a tummy ache
Gretel groans in bed
The old witch over-urged them
To eat her ginger bread

Peter Rabbit hoppetys
Farmer Brown gives chase
That good old clump of cabbage patch
Is still his favorite place

The sleeping princess wearies
Insomnia makes her weep
She yearns for some Prince Charming
To kiss her back to sleep

Childhood goes but still it's not
The end of story lore
When you've become a grown-up
You'll love it even more

The story books of later days
May lose their lilt and laughter
But the fairy tale will always live
Happily ever after.

What do you think other than the fact that no tiny tot is going to have the faintest idea of what insomnia is.

As is
Sev

CORRESPONDENCE

June 13th

'Lo Greenes

The head babu at the club is now a case for the Military Police. We were all crazy about him. There was nothing he wouldn't do for us. I am convinced that radio program has the right idea, "crime does not pay". An investigation brought forth the following incriminating evidence. He had regularly stolen supplies from the store room and sold them on the black market. He complained that the Indians could not stand work in the canteen and so the Red Cross kept sending reinforcements from Calcutta. The work weary ones disappeared. He sold them into slavery. As a parting shot the babu left with the contents of the safe, \$450. Club directors face this problem no matter what country they are in. I believe the Chinese are considered even greater thieves than the Indians.

The full force of the Monsoons hasn't swept over us yet but we keep getting these sudden splats of driving wind and rain and deafening thunder. In the mornings now the natives on their way to work with their great black umbrellas remind us of a horde of little Black Sambos. In between the storms is so stifling that after our afternoon nap our sheets and mattresses have to be put out in the sun to dry.

Marcia and I expect a transfer anytime now. Our field director decided the truck was in the shop too much and wrote to headquarters to have it discontinued. In this event we will move on.

We muddled ourselves into quite a discussion on communism last night. I was surprised at the number of people who defended it. On the other hand, I was disgusted with those who persisted in running over at the mouth on something they haven't even read about. Their only acquaintance with Russia is the Don Cossack Choir on a Victor phonograph record. If that!

All sit around and complain of the heat while I pound out a geography course on the typewriter. Five hours of each day are set aside for this. My trip to Australia was fascinating. I couldn't break away from the book. Whenever one of the girls interrupted me I told her that I was humping across the Sandy Desert camel-back and conversation from the remote regions of India disturb me. For the remainder of the day they intercepted all phone calls for me and informed my friends that I had gone to Australia with a Stanley Livingston complex.

The book everyone is raving about, Forever Amber, nose dived in my estimation. How an author could take 400 and some pages to repeat over and over again that Amber, facing a shortage in funds, reverted to the role of a kept woman is beyond me.

Interesting fact of the week: (I'm going to have to run over to Australia for this one.)

You've heard people say, "It gives me the willies", meaning "Gosh, I'm scared." The expression comes from the west of Australia where the summer cyclonic storm sweeps away everything in its path. The natives call it "willie-willie".

The past few mornings have been clear as a bell. We can see the Himalayas off in a blue haze. I'd like to take their amazing hue and press it into some Shetland wool. Vogue could then sketch the resulting suit in the March issue and call it Mountain Blue. On the next page they could feature a daring formal and call it Blue Moon. The advertising agency I didn't write to for a job during one of my flights of fancy has no idea what they have missed. As I recall, it was in connection with Red Book and that would never have done.

The cockroaches intermittently glare at me and bat the dust buns under my bed. The white ants eat into the beams of structures hereabouts and already two mortar pools have caved in. A regiment of them are working over time on Marcia's bed and any night I expect her to "fall into a deep sleep".

Indian skies form and reform the intricate cloud patterns that ever make her a great art exhibit. The commonest earth-incident can have a queer high poetry and even comfort.

Time for bed---

Love
Sev

ENVELOPE

AIR MAIL

(Sender) Jeanne Severance, 49917
 Am. Red Cross, A.P.O. 487
 c/o Postmaster, New York City

(Addressee) The Greene Family
 Newtown Lane
 E. Hampton, Long Island

(Postmark) US. Army Service APO 487 June 23 1945 487

(Postmark) Passed by Army Base Examiner 1850

CORRESPONDENCEJune 22nd'Lo Greenes

It's raining again and the rain drops are making ballentine ale ads all over the puddles. The heat has become so intense that we just spend our afternoons napping and thinking up ways to conserve energy. My "sit still" occupation is assembling material for an economic geography text book. It sounds stuffy but I'm having a wonderful time doing it. Naturally it is going to be completely different from the run of the mill. It is what Van Loon said he was going to do in his book Geography and didn't.

Lizzy Lizard has made her contribution to lizard-anity with triplicates. She has been "netting little things" (catching bugs) to appease their gnawing hunger for gnats. I like a great aunt plod through adolescence with them looking to the days when they are grown-up enough to battle beetles.

We went on a boat trip down the river Sunday. It was the first party at which we didn't have to lift a finger or plan a plan. A picnic luncheon was laid before us – all the iced drinks we could slug—turkey—chicken—fruit—pickles—we lacked nothing. All afternoon we lolled in the sun, looked at the mountains and imagined ourselves on a summer vacation. I was with a fellow who had attended the MacAlpin School of Music. He had a wonderful voice. After four beers, he sang Jennie With the Light Brown Hair, the Ave Marie's, I Love You Truly and other nostalgic melodys in my ear. After the fifth beer he wanted to divorce his wife. We came aground on a sand bar for two hours making us all late for work. Marcie and I just dragged ourselves through the serving of coffee and doughnuts. Others may damn the Indian bed but at days end crawling in holds all the pomp and circumstance of an inspiring ceremony for me. Next Sunday, bright and early, we jeep trek into Burma. I can't wait for that trip.

Once in a while I dash home from work at night, slip into my gownless evening straps, trip off with some handsome fellow to Hump Happy where I spend the remainder of the evening being a woman again. Until my evening sandals wear out I can continue to throw my femininity around for a while.

Interesting fact of the week:

The book God is my Co-Pilot was written in one of the tea planters bungalows about five miles from here. The author was a Colonel Scott and it was merely a coincidence that another man with the same name and rank is living there now. To you and I the book would seem a true account but the pilots who were here then admit to many discrepancies in the story. It is not the best seller here that it is in the states.

So many of the fellows we know are going home. I just received a card from one saying, "Having a fine wish, time you were here!" Me too.

Love---~~Jeanne~~ what am I doing---"Sev"

CORRESPONDENCE

June just about over

Hi Greenes---

Miracle of the moment—the monsoons petered out for fifteen minutes. This morning the sun was like a butter ball in a blue saucer. But like the rationed staple at home the memory of it will have to spread over a long period.

Last Sunday morning—up at 5:00—objective Burma! With a trailer stacked with hot roast chicken, french fries, cheese, cake, and a box of ice packed with coke and beer we sallied forth. At Hell's Gate we touched on our last bit of civilization. There in the foothills of the Himalayas I lost myself. It was raining a steady drizzle and though we missed the clearness of the view it lent an even wilder aspect to the mountains. Great clouds of mist swirled about the peaks and down in the depths of the ravines, to 4280 feet you almost know the next flight up would be Heaven. There were immense plants with leaves as big as you or I. Grass of the same stature dwarfed us like the little people in Gulliver's Travels. The trees not only possessed the land for miles around but poked gaunt fingers into the sky-line too. Now and then a telephone pole pulsed us back to reality. Damn Bell! The pipe line which snakes its way into China peeped through the mud at various intervals. Convoys roared by. The road was a mire of red loam slithering us dangerously near a precipice that dropped breathlessly into space. Not a man, beast or bird appeared to inhabit that country. Driving over the Burma border I expected a complete change but it was no different. We thought just putting our feet on Burmese territory would make us sound more worldly when we fairy taled the folks at home with, "Oh yes, we spent a little time in Burma." At this point in the story you are supposed to answer, "Travel is so broadening, my dear." Please remember to deliver this in a dramatic whisper. Nevertheless I can't think of much I'd trade for that trip.

I am entering some bits in Reader's Digest \$25 competition for their column Picturesque Speech and Patter. Instead of humping them all together on a single typewritten page I am dribbling them in one by one, week by week. I reasoned that if I couldn't win a cash prize on my creative ability, I might be able to wear them down.

I have completed my chapter on Economic Geography and Religion and am submitting it to the chaplan for criticism. He is not only suited to his profession but is a connoisseur of good literature. I'm holding my breath. I have also sent the chapter This Changing World (concerned with modern invention harnessing the elements) to the geography professor at college. She reminds me of a shaggy old Saint Bernard so I am expecting encouragement from that quarter. I've just finished six hours more of steady research so I am mentally whipped. Rather than ramble on~~to~~ into dull dialogue I bow out.

All's well with the world and Jean Mallory—

Love
Me

Handwritten: Pst. I set out for work barefooted and your Mike arrived. Thanks! Chee, ain't friends wonderful!

Don't think this chicken wouldn't like to be managing the Surf Club this season.

I sent your cartoon about Ma & Pa Severance home. You'll be able to hear them hooting all the way to the Island when it arrives.

Patty Hunt's at International House if you ever are by 500 Riverside Drive.

ENVELOPE

AIR MAIL

(Sender) Jeanne Severance, 49917
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 c/o Postmaster, New York City

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CORRESPONDENCE

'Lo Greenes

I am so far behind in my letter writing that I can't remember just what I did say in the last one. If I repeat myself just chalk it up to over activity. Our trip to China was a lark. We took time out to explore Burmese temples that had been bombed out. They have the cutest turned-up nose roofs. Alongside every temple is a wooden structure, a kind of raised platform with pillars. This is where the dancing girls perform. The main temple usually of stone is adorned with buddhas of every conceivable size. On the very tip of the topmost dome is a metal tent like fixture painted in gilt. From a distance it gives the illusion of pure gold. Hanging from the top piece are very fine strips of metal like a fringe border on a scarf. The slightest breeze causes them to click one against the other and the effect is a soft bell-like tinkle. So you can find a temple not only by looking but also by listening.

We served Seagraves Hospital the setting for the book Burma Surgeon. The wards bear evidence of the continuous onslaught of the Japanese Zeros. We had hoped to meet Colonel Seagraves himself but he was away for a few weeks. We may catch him on our next run up there. Meanwhile I am looking around for one of his books so I can get him to autograph it.

From Namkham to Musee to Wanting which was our turnabout point. Jane and I decided to take the jeep and drive over into China. At the border outpost we picked up a lone American officer quartered there with the Chinese. His is a horribly lonely life so you can imagine how enthusiastic ~~life~~ he was on our arrival. We started across a little wooden bridge and half way over suddenly there we were in China. It is the wildest most desolate country I have ever seen. Chinese brigands are tucked away in the hills. To travel unarmed is suicide and even then it is a hundred to one chance that you'll get through without a mishap. We passed Japanese foxholes, pillboxes, snipers nests barely visible among the trees. I can imagine the terrific battle to dislodge the Japs from those hills. We saw the holes they had cut into the sides of cliffs where they actually lived during the siege. There was just enough room to crawl in on your hands and knees and lie down. We stopped to look at pits where the Japs had so called buried their dead. They hadn't bothered to pile dirt on top of them. They were just thrown in one upon the other and left to rot. The skulls and bones had been picked clean by vultures. In amongst the bones were stray pieces of Jap equipment and remnants of clothing.

We had our first introduction to the true Chinese army. The majority are barefooted. Their uniforms are worn thin and ragged. We stopped to talk to one –a boy of thirteen!!! They are little

immaciated dirty and unkempt men. They have no respect for human life. If one of their own wrecks a truck on the Stilwell Road the penalty is death. He is shot instantly. They have been known to push one another out of the doors of a C46 while it was in the air. This is a form of their sense of humor. Every Chinese is a born thief. Whoever said heathen Chinese meant thieven. The hospital unit at Lashio set up an emergency ward, furnishing it with cots, blankets and other equipment. They had worked like beavers to finish it this particular night. The following morning they found that the entire place had been stripped clean by the Chinese. The chaplain up there told us that if he ever caught one of them in his tent he would pronounce the last rites and then shoot.

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We have a marvelous time all of the time. We can always be assured that when we pull into our overnight stop ~~this~~ during the course of our stay, something will happen. At this point I mention in passing that neither of us have a warm feeling for even the tiniest member of the snake family. A good sized angle worm is reason enough for screaming. Frank Sinatra had nothing on them. So Jane (undecipherable) over to the mirror to do something for the boys and as she was about to apply the lipstick she saw coiled along the top edge, a snake sticking his tongue out at her like a two year old. In our moment of courage (?) we remembered a lecture back in Washington in which they stressed the allocation of responsibility. This being a moment of stress we figured the time had come. We aren't exactly cowards but we cannot tell a lie. An officer did it with his little hatchet. I'd draw a picture of it for you but it puts me in mind of a tall tale and besides four widths of this paper couldn't begin to bridge the gap from fang to fanny.

Lickety splicket and we're ready to fly to Lashio for our next trip. The arrival of a plane is unpredictable. We finally made it but not without the usual prolonged waiting, tapping of feet and finger twiddling. The next time I shall have enough foresight to carry along a complete edition of Sheakespear. In the time element involved in sweating out a plane I should have thorough memorization. Even then we very nearly didn't make the plane due to the problem of weight. We said we were sure we had no more than 300 pounds of equipment with us. The pilot took one look at the pile, went over to our huge container of doughnuts, lifted one end and mentally registered an additional hundred pounds. You can understand now why they aren't used in air drop. The story goes that this novel idea was tried out and two G.T.'s died of brain concussion.

It was my first flight in a C46. I looked through, listened at and wiggled all kinds of gadgets. They explained the mathematical process involved in reading the radar mechanism. Rather than appear completely ignorant of what they called a simple procedure I managed to look breathlessly interested. This is many times a good substitute for an intelligent look and some of the people some of the time are fooled. Lashio is a mire of bright red mud puddles that are being dripped in constantly—the rain never seems to go dry. The place practically isn't. It may be a big period on your map but it's down to a pin prick as far as our army is concerned.

Attention please: I have received official notice of my promotion to Captain plus a \$73 a month raise in pay as of September. You may send me roses.

The war news has certainly been a morale builder. You can't imagine the high pitch of excitement over here. Our ears are beginning to look like radio speakers as we listen so often so hard. And then Japan turned tail. Jane and I were out on the road. Arriving at our overnight stop we crawled into bed leaving word with the officers who were staging an all night vigil to awaken us if the news

broke. At 5:30 a.m. they did. My first thought was to run to the nearest pay station at the nearest corner drug store and put in a long distance call home to tell the folks to set another place for dinner. Jane was out of her mind too. We both wanted to cry but sitting up in bed there in the darkness we decided it was much too dramatic a gesture—there had been enough of that already. So we each dropped a tear without telling one another and went back to sleep. I wonder what you people did?

We shot back down the road and made it in time to celebrate with our friends. Knowing what hard liquor does to me and not wanting to miss a moment of the fun by being roaring drunk, I stuck to beer. The next morning I was the only one who could hop gaily out of bed and take my ravenous appetite over to the club for bacon and eggs. All by myself I sat there and ate everyones eggs. Those who had the strength, were furious with me for, as they put it, my vulgar display of good health. I am addressed now as the stinker who wasn't stinko. Down at the regional office in Ledo I find I have been nicknamed also. The girls have never met me and I'm beginning to wonder whether they've ever seen me either for they call me "the Shape". I really haven't begun to bulge.

The good new doesn't change our job one bit. Still rumors fly fast and frequently that we will all be home for Christmas. I shall let you know when to have the brass band at what station. But don't hold your breath. The Red Cross will be the last out which is as it should be.

Ta Ta
Sev

ENVELOPE

AIR MAIL

(Sender) Jeanne Severance, 49917
 Am. Red Cross, A.P.O. 218
 c/o Postmaster, New York City

(Addressee) The Greene Family
 Newtown Lane
 E. Hampton, Long Island

(Postmark) US. Army Service APO 487 September 16 1945 487

CORRESPONDENCE'Lo Greenes

September 15th

Well here I am again with "The Call of the Open Road" yooohooing me up the Burmese rut to China. The word was not route. I am beginning to wonder whether that poem is as fascinating to me as it once was. The answer is "Probably."

I have just had a six months physical examination. With the exception of skin diseases they can take Superman out of the comic strip and substitute me. I have the usual ring worm which alternately dries up when it's cool and breaks out again when it's hot. I also have a skin infection under my arm pit that is a common thing over here. It also has to wear itself out at the end of the hot season. I went for treatment but quick. You just can't let things go for a minute over here. At one of the air strips the other day I was watching a Burmese coolie load planes. There was one poor creature there with a horrible looking foot. These natives go out in the rice paddies, knee deep in muck and a leech fastens himself on an available spot. After removing it, instead of caring for the little sore spot, back they go into more muck. It begins to be an ugly looking sore. Before they know it they are victims of jungle rot. That was what was wrong with this Burmese coolie. Half of his foot had been eaten away. Maggots were crawling all over the awfulest pus infection I have ever seen. The poison had begun to circulate through his system. He was gaunt, stooped over and a pale pasty color. He is probably dead by now. We think of civilization as it is in our country. It is many years behind over here.

Fanfare please! We now own four dogs, two females and two pups. The pups are like little teddy bears, brimming over with pep. I wish that was all. I call them the piddle poodles and if I do say so myself they are well named. Witness, the rug.

Men are moving out of Burma by the hundreds. The British say we must be out of here by the first of the year. Rather than back track in an assignment to India, Jane and I may try for Shanghai. The Japs have left it just as it was in peace time. There women are not at such a premium. The city is full of white Russians who can keep the men busy while we relax nights, for a change. This statement would sound incongruous at home.

Our dear allies (the Chinese) are still busy stealing everything but the foundations of our base. Jane's date brought her in one morning about 3 a.m. and as he was driving out he caught them red handed walking off with our garage. I have never forgiven him for not waking me up so I could give them the one two with my thirty-two. I swear if I catch one I'll kill him. That's what they do with them in China and who am I to change the national policy. The C of CBI part of this war is the biggest joke of all time. The diluded propogandists should be relegated to asylums for feeding the American people such a pack of lies. The Honorable Chiang, Generalissimo Glorious, says that one Chinese soldier is worth three of any of the allied armies. So 35 American soldiers, one whom I know very well, replaced an

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entire Chinese battalion at Myitkyina. Twelve year old Kutchins are sent out to bring in deserters from the Chinese army. Like the Royal Mounted they always get their man.

This afternoon I had cocktails with a Britisher who just came back from a visit to the prison in the native village here. At the time they were pulling out the toe nails of a Chinese thief with a pair of plyers. The world is so full of a number of things.

The families of Jane and Jeanne Inc. came very close to receiving our respective dog tags with the accompanying notation, "Died in line of duty." I go white every time I think of it. We were driving back from the Chinese border the other night. The road was ribbon width, curleyqueing through treacherous mountain passes. We met a colored convoy saked to the gills. Saki is a native potent made out of rice and gasoline. I swear by everything that is sacred that a jeep can run on it. The sensible fellows use it in their lighters because the fluid the P.X. is stocked with is worthless. Three shots of this and you are out of your mind. Three tremendous 6x6's, loaded with tanks of hundred octaine gas charged down upon us. We in our little blob of a jeep never felt so insignificant. One went flip-flop bottoms up into the ditch. The colored fellow merely opened the door and jumped out unscathed. The other two trucks sscreeched by almost taking the one and only freckle from my right arm. Neither Jane nor I screamed. We were too numb. All the colored fellows had to say was did we have any American whisky. When death stopped panting on the back of my neck I was so mad I could have strangled those fellows with my bare hands. You never argue with a man drunk from Saki, if you want to live. So, too much in love with life to give it up, we drove on. Ah wilderness!

The "I Married Adventure" woman has very little on me. She and Marty supplied a national zoo with wild species from Africa. I am trying to figure out how to get my leopard kitten to Buffalo's local Delaware Park menagerie. If it were just a bit larger I could wrap it around my neck at the top of next winters coat. In view of the fact that I already have four dogs I am in a dilemma as to how to hold on to the kitten. Mr. Anthony, I very definitely have a problem. Who knows (heh heh) you may be the lucky recipient.

Some of the flying personnel over here are making a fortune on the side. They buzz into Calcutta, return with a plane load of merchandise, sell it in the villages for thirty times its normal price. A young colonel I instinctively disliked, made 4000 rupees as a result of a two day trip. This is only \$1200 in American money. According to army specifications he is an officer and a gentleman. They may catch up with him yet. I sometimes wonder at these money made people. There must be hundreds who have never had the courage to do the work they would be happiest in and have tied themselves down to a lucrative position for the social standing that it gives. I'll take the man engaged in work which

represents at its worst an over indulgence in a hobby. He is doing what millions of men slaving in offices amassing or trying to amass money have in mind doing when at long last they are able to retire. So his critics say he is lacking in ambition which is a lie. He has already realised his ambition. And so, oh Best Beloved (as they say in the Woodyard Kindling Unjust So Stories) that is why mankind weeps crocodile tears. Untangle that one.

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I spend Saturday nites from ten to twelve at the radio station helping record phone call requests for records to be played on the Open House Program. The fellow who does the news broadcasts used to be the Thin Man on the radio. He is typical Broadway stage. He's not the star struck type that dashed to New York, pounds the pavements from stage door to stage door and finally with a "life is tragic look" takes his last penny and buys a ticket for home. Les is a real trouper. Like the others he leans slightly to the Bohemian side. You can visualize him throwing a big party in his apartment and knowing twenty out of the fifty who are there. Theatre people are an entirely different race of men. They drift; marriage is too much responsibility; children are a nuisance, they want to do what they want at any hour they want. Many of them go through the stage of being a "bum" as they call it. Drinking for days and dashing about with loose women nights. If they are any good when they get through they may embark on a relatively successful stage career. If they aren't they still may. Take the character roles from all the fiction books ever written and you have the people of the theatre.

The lieutenant in charge of the radio station is another study. He is a playwright who will never get over it. I have an idea at one time he must have written some sparkling dialogue ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ for Podunk Summer Theatre and has used the lines in his daily conversation ever since. People are funny.

The slogan of the hour, "HOME BY FEBRUARY!!!

Love
"Sev"

(Handwritten postscript)

Pst: I know for sure that Jim Ryan is going to get in touch with me when I finally am at home. I shall treat your information with the utmost delicacy, believe me.

Mart, I am beginning to lay plans for scholarship application at Syracuse in that student personnel course. If this theatre is to be cleared out completely I should be home by March at the very latest. Between then and the fall session I'm going to have to fill in time. I have an idea that ~~that~~ the Montauk Beach Corp. will be moving back into big time. But if they are delayed in retiring the experienced help they once had and want a new rookie for the Surf Club, keep me in mind. I think I we could make an improvement on my initial performance. You know me well enough to know that I don't expect a darned thing. But if they're desperate they might take me.

I think my brother did it again which makes me another aunt. God, but I'm standing still!

Sev

Tell Mary Constance I am concerned about right arm – did they amputate? She could take a lesson from your Mom!

Sev

CORRESPONDENCE (This document is typed in a way that letters appear backwards to the reader and the letter must be read right to left)

October 19th

'Lo Greenes

It has been many moons! I've had much to write but no time to write it. Although the date of this is the 19th I'm going to start way back in the days when I was working out of Bhamo.

I had been doing some work on my free time down at the radio station. Having graduated from answering phones for Open House programs Saturday night, I began setting up the records for an entire weeks program and then typed them up in schedule form. You know how kids decide a dozen times that they are going to be this or that when they are grown ups. It usually begins with the garbage man (undecipherable) and then ups to the milkman. When the horses and wagons made way for the automobile carrier it lost a little of its umph. A trapeze artist in a circle is the next dream because you have come of age and have just tasted your first Ringling Brothers performance. And so it goes. Well, I just passed through the "woman at the radio controls" stage. Not an announcer but the one who spins the dials, pushes the buttons and lets him out into the ether. Looking back to my childhood defeat at reassembling a Singer Sewing Machine which I had just ////////// disassembled (one funny gadget left over) I decided it was not practical.

It is really amazing the chance occasions that have arisen for me to drop familiar work that earns my bread and butter and take on some wholly unrelated occupations. I just had an offer to take over the secretarial responsibilities of a hair dressing salon in Rangoon. I would be in New York six months and then come back over. The fellow who made me the offer was a well known specialist in New York. He did quite a bit of work with radio and screen stars. The plans were all laid out before the war, the women beauty specialists contracted and zoom --it waits on the peace and a secretary. Life is one big bag of surprises. I could make big money and live like a queen over here. But what is money. My previous experience as hostess in a beauty parlor left me allergic to tempermental women. Rangoon—romantically euphonic—that is all. Can't you just see the customers at the height of the torrid temperatures going from medium rare to well done under a hairdryer!

At present I am witnessing a vulgar display of wanton destruction. Today right before my eyes I saw a \$30,000 piece of engineering equipment blown to bits. Every jeep, plane, 6x6, bulldozer, bomb, ammunition dump, tank, warehouse and office building is being dynamited or torn down. Sheets, blankets, clothing and shoes are being burned by the carloads. Some of the men told me that selling too much of this to the British would ruin the post war market. The army policy, therefore, is to wipe it out of existence. I just about wept when I heard of the tossing of portable typewriters into the Irrawaddy. Remember the taxes that made us a nation of liars early in the war---pouff!

Here lies Jeanne Mallory. I flew up here to Ledo to the 20th General Hospital with five abscesses in my right arm pit. No need to worry. I am going to live. I am receiving the best care in the world and am thoroughly respect ted by the nurses and surgeon because I didn't scream and wanted to.

Far be it from me to tell them that my teeth were so tightly clamped together that I couldn't have peeped. Every day or so they cut the things open. The surgeon who does the job has been called every semi-violent name I can think of. When he came in yesterday I told him I had a real low down dirty one which would have to remain unsaid because I didn't fell up to a court martial. I'm recovering, but fast, and I have a chance now to observe the rest of the ward with interest.

We have four psychos among the bed patients.

I'll take my abscesses!

One of them burps continually. If I had been her I would have made a formal /// apology to the entire ward and then let 'em go. Another walks like a duck but slower, hunches her head down between her shoulders and throws that entire part of her anatomy forward. Her carriage alone is grotesque enough but to really qualify her for a Boris Karloff role she has a right eyelid that droops.

I'll take my abscesses!

Then we have a girl something similar to Shakespears Ophelia in her early stages of insanity. She even wears the kind of pajamas that remind you of the flowers Ophelia strewed about the stage in her madness.

Abscesses—yes sir!!!

But the one who tickles me isn't a psycho. She's a girl you can observe casually and suddenly find you're getting thirty years ahead of yourself. Her mother was one of the state representatives for some humanitarian group in a small town in Kansas. She was the woman who was invariably asked to be guest speaker at the Fall meeting of the local literary club, or dig the hole for the seed of the first flower to be planted at the Spring meeting of the Garden Club. The younger model is going to do likewise. She is now developing // the lust that is in most cases a prerequisite. She is keeping her love life super-sophisticated; she is never going to lose her head over a man. She plays every ones bridge hand and winds up with an—"continued in the next issue" post mortem. The mouse brown laced oxfords she wears now she will always wear. She'd be a sweet kid if she'd just remember that it is impossible for one person to know everything and that she has all the rest of her life to be a matron.

It is wonderful the little colloquialisms and opinions people in one state will have in comparison to another. The extreme east and west coasts seem to be more in our attention than any of the others—sections of the country. I suppose the constant exchange of personnel in the moving picture industry—Hollywood to Broadway screen to stage and back again—is responsible for our thinking in somewhat similar lines of interest. Over here a Californian is no different than a New Yorker. But go just over that imaginary mid-western line and you have real contrast. Every time I think

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of this typical example of mid-western opinion of the east I hoot. This girls mother was sent as a delegate to a conference in New York City. It was her initial trip east. The community and her organization associates were not as interested in the convention reports as they were in her impressions of the big city! On her return question after question was put to her.

"What was such and such like?"

"Oh—all right?"

"How was this, as magnificent as they say?"

“Well possibly.”

Bound to get some show of animation they asked if the height of the Empire State Building took her breath aay. Her answer was, “They could drop that building in the canyon on the south east corner of our pasture and it would never be seen again.” If I could be sure of hearing another incident as rich in humor and philosophy as that one I’d go out and find me more abcesses. What am I saying.

October 28

I was dismissed from the hospital at the end of a week, flew back to Bhamo, packed up and drove back to Ledo for my new assignment. Here I am. Correspondence grows increasingly difficult and will be worse as our job draws to a close. Jane and I were split up. The whole thing was a pretty raw deal. We won’t go into it. A grand gang has taken me in as if I were someone they had known all their lives. My new job is as different from the other as day and night. All we do is serve men at train stations and staging areas as they start their long trek home. It’s here today and gone tomorrow. The new job will never be as satisfying as the old. The regional office is situated here. The high monkey monks wear a path through Ledo back to Washington, D.C. They are critical of the fluffs and flounces. We are trying to do the job, produce it in the manner of a Broadway hit, and at the same time we ourselves are attending a continual masked ball. This added effort of putting on a big splurge plus the superficiality of the regional office is going to be something for me to adjust to. The variance from the essentials takes a little of the wholeheartedness out of the job. Ledo will close in December and this will mean another move. Being aware of the excess of Red Cross workers here now I typed up my resignation and asked for January shipment home.

The last two days we have been photographed, interviewed and moving-pictured endlessly. Mr. Mayer of Metro-Goldwin was behind one of the cameras, believe it or not. I believe they are taking the results back to Washington and flashing them about under some human interest title like The Red Cross is by his side, yes, to the veddy end!! Judging from the personality of the woman who is the pride of the public relations office in Calcutta, the story she is going to publish should be a howl. I don’t mean funny ha-ha, but frilly silly. Of all the unusual experiences we had on the Burma road, she thinks the fact that we owned a wild leopard kitten and carried a 45 revolver is just breath taking. Jane and I both gave up. The kitten was given to us by one of the G.I.’s period. In her write up there Jane and I sit in the places of honor on either side of the native chieften. The village has gathered about an immense fire in the center of the ceremonial grounds. The dance has begun. It is a fanatic spectacle held on the night of the full moon. One by one the dancers drop

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exhausted from the circle. As the legend goes the last man standing has earned the privilege of presenting the chieftens gift to the guests of honor. And so Jane and Jeanne, there in that far away land, are entrusted with the care of a leopard kitten to be delivered with “A-Message To Garcia” flourish to the Congress of the United States of America. Fan fare! I think you get the idea.

Who knows, I may be asked for an “I use Ipana” statement yet. My dead tooth, front and top, had blacked and broken off to the extent that I began looking like the witch that rides the sky on a broom stick Halloween night. No matter how often I practiced I couldn’t exude a wierd cackling laugh—

besides I can't wear black. All or nothing at all. If I couldn't be a witchy witch I refused to go on looking like an understudy for one of Shakespears "bubble bubble, toil and trouble" hags. (See MacBeth) (I think) I needed a completely new personality which only a dental specialist could achieve. With an effective amount of the "you're wonderful" approach, the transformation was accomplished in three days. I grabbed for the mirror. I leered and leered and then leered just a little bit more studying the effect of the porcelain peg. Heddy Lamar? No-o-o. Greta Garbo? No-o-o. Well anyway, suddenly I found I had lost my haunting childhood inferiority over a face full of crooked teeth. I decided I would have to become the sophisticated type. I started to speak. I was going to say something scintillating, poised and punctuate it with a languid gesture. I lisped---!!! I lisped just as I had when I was modeling my baby blue romper suits. In those days when anyone asked me my name all I could answer was, "Thathy Jeanne Theveranth." I had reverted! I tried the "Sally sells sea shells" ditty and failed miserably. My audience just hooted while I considered going gawkstrich and burying my head in the nearest sand pile. When the dentist sobered up and regained strength enough to speak he assured me it was a common occurrence. The only way to overcome it was read aloud for a few hours. Very disconsolate I trekked tentward, took out a book of Shakespeare and began. Jane lay in bed and thought it such a hilarious performance that I insisted on a two rupee admission charge. I have practically recovered from my speech defect but I still have to watch it after the second beer.

I guess it would take a genius to understand this war. At home you are ushered into it through the front door while over here we slip in the back way. It is difficult for me to nod casually at our paying for the destruction of British property which had to be bombed by our air force to clear the way to winning it back for the British. Every inch of it has to be evaluated. The towns and cities will be rebuilt at our expense. Every piece of standing timber harmed must be paid for. One tea bush destroyed costs our government \$5. The rental charge for a four foot strip of land running from Tinsukia to Myitkyina over which our pipe line is laid, cost us 3 million dollars. The British tents which are far superior to ours in a climate of this kind, were rented to the military at \$35 per month. But paying for property damaged by bombs dropped to win back territory seems almost unbelievable. I met an officer who is now traveling throughout the theater to evaluate the worth of businesses, buildings and land now out of commission. It must be true.

Time for dinner.

Handwritten

My dear Constance---

You're a stinker! If it weren't for your family I'd cut you off cold. So there. You'll never believe it but I am very well acquainted with Peg Price who used to ride to and from work with you. Swell gal--a terrific bridge hound. She is stationed here in Ledo also. I told her because she was a friend of yours and you were a friend of mine I didn't feel the least bit guilty about dropping in and drinking all her beer. Which I do. I some times think she wishes you'd never met me. The other day we were talking about letter writing and I told her as regards that, you were no friend of mine. She jumped back with "O.K. no beer." So you see, I have to be nice to you.

Love
Sev

ENVELOPE

AIR MAIL

(Sender) Jeanne Severance, 49917
 Am. Red Cross, A.P.O. 689
 c/o Postmaster, N.Y.C.

(Addressee) The Greene Family
 Newtown Lane
 E. Hampton, Long Island

(Postmark) US. Army Postal Service APO 689 November 2, 1945

CORRESPONDENCELo GreenesAugust 7th

Unfold your maps, lay them out on the floor, flop on your stomach beside them and follow me. I've been on the move with practically twenty league boots. After being sent to Ledo for reassignment I left there and traveled 103 miles along the Stillwell Road to Shimgewiyang. This was the first leg of our journey to Bhamo. It was a treacherous drive. The road had been closed for a week due to landslides which completely obliterated it in places. Huge cliffs had caved in bringing down rock, surface dirt and immense trees. The dust was so thick you couldn't see four feet in front of you. We passed convoys all the way up. Narrow snake like roads – a great bank on one side and endless drops on the other. For diversion these truck drivers try to squeeze you off on the narrow ~~ad~~ side. Just a few times my sense of humor was taxed to the breaking point but I lived. During the day the mountains are a priceless picture but in the twilight they are superb. Light tans as you would see among the Sierra Navadas and a ghostly black green that reminds you of the color you think about while reading the fairy story of the three brothers who were turned into stone. There was the usual mountain blue and layer upon layer of jungle in varying shades of green –no two alike.

Arriving finally in Shimgewiyang ^{^ I stayed} in the basha reserved for transient generals. I told the men to watch themselves or I'd pull my rank on them. This is the place from which the first Japs had to be driven out. It is a camp hacked out of the jungle. To go twenty yards off the road is to be lost forever. We were really moving up into Frank Buck's country. The luxurious days are over –bashas have no doors---just curtains—little girls rooms are a five minute walk---laundry isn't done—shoes stay dirty—there are no such things as pillows—canvas cots are the vogue but the clear cool woodsy smell was worth it all. This was the historic spot where they built the special johnny for Francis Langford while she was on tour in the theatre. There was a clever article in the CBI Round-up telling about the tourists along the Stillwell Road in 1956. Shim was to be the high spot with a plush seated johnny and a bronze plaque inscribed, "Francis sat here."

We arrived in Warzzup after traveling a straight wide road through the valley. There was very little scenic beauty, merely a road cut through the jungle. This was the renowned Merrill Marauder territory. Along the way we passed abandoned Jap tanks remnants of the days when they made a real

stand there. This complete road should go down in history as one of the seven wonders of the world. For every mile its building cost our engineers a life.

There at Warzup we ran into a scare. Thirty days of rain had made an island of the base, completely surrounded by water. Food had to be air dropped. But this wasn't the real danger. A tiger was also stranded on that island. The air droppers not in the habit of providing rations for tigers, the brute got pretty hungry. Having once tasted human blood these cats become man eaters. Two GI's and three natives were attacked and torn to bits. When we arrived the smoke pots were still kept burning at night. I don't need to tell you that the front and back doors to my basha were barricaded. I had no furniture, just a bed in the corner. I sat on the floor propping myself against the bed and listened for tigers and read Plato's Republic. I'm not khaki wackey. Plato had amazing powers of reasoning and I needed a few lessons to drum up a hundred some reasons why that tiger wouldn't want me for a midnight snack.

The next day we set out for Myitkyina. We made it in three hours, taking to pontoon bridges because of the washouts. This war wouldn't without the engineers. We passed a little abandoned railway that had been used to transport combat troops when the Japs were still in Burma. The cars standing there on the siding were riddled with bullet holes. Empty though they were it was not a pretty sight.

The gals in Myitkyina are just like the old gang. I was the envied guest because everyone is getting the clubmobile bug. Because they're swell kids I'd like to work out of there but the run would be along treacherous road; single lane with the ever present drop into hell on one side and cliffs ready to land slide you under on the other. Naturally the girls don't consider this when they get these glamorous notions about mobile units.

We drove into Bahmo under a full moon. Wouldn't you know I'd be with an old fluff of a regional director. Romance doesn't seem to be a part of my life (said exhaling and sighing with a hand to the forehead in the style of the Greek tragedian. I very definitely belong here in Bhamo. I was shown to my cubby hole in our basha home and there on my bed sat a great green kattydid. I didn't flutter an eyelid. I was too tired to register any emotion. At least that was what I thought at the time. I was sitting facing my mosquito net window putting my hair up and a colored fellow peered in from outside and propositioned me. I pretended I hadn't heard him, dashed into another girls room and she and I went out armed with just a GI flashlight. No luck. Half an hour later the same face appeared t the same window asking the same question. I told him to get the hell out of there or I'd come out and put a slug in him. Big tough me without a slug. So these are the joys of the forward area.

These fellows have some really gruesome stories to tell about the Chinese and the trouble they have had with them. It just doesn't jibe with the pat-on-the-back policy at home. It is darned funny and suggestively intentional that none of it has leaked into the newsreels or the headlines. There's no sense in my trying to tell you about it because freedom of speech over here is taken care of by the censor. Stillwells removal is understandable now.

The girl I am working with is Jane Emig from Columbus Ohio. She has a cute smile that wrinkles up her nose, is very short, and expert at her job. Marcia is stuck back in Ledo helping design the new clubmobiles acquiring prickley heat and fuming. Rather than serve colored outfits she may transfer to club work.

In my next letter I'll tell you all about this new set up. I've been into China already and am now on my way to Lashio. No time for nothin'. I thought you would enjoy hearing about my trip up here. I am one of the few women who has traveled the entire Stillwell ~~by jeep.~~ Road by jeep. When I get home if you're very good I'll give you my autograph.

For now

Sev

ENVELOPE

AIR MAIL

(Sender) Jeanne Severance, 49917
 Am. Red Cross, A.P.O. 689
 c/o Postmaster, New York City

(Addressee) The Greene Family
 Newtown Lane
 East Hampton, Long Island

(Postmark) _____ Postal Service _____ 1945

CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. S. Claus season

'Lo Greenes _____

From the radio a mixed choir hums a soft prelude to Silent Night and we in our flannel pajamas, our chairs circling a little pot-bellied stove, light up our cigarettes and sit quietly—nobody saying anything but everyone bound together in a single reminiscence. Looking over ones shoulder, dreaming in the past is not courageous living. But as the days fade into nights in this Christmas season we can't help ourselves. Although we have no part in festivities as we knew them, it is not the painful heartbreaking holiday you might imagine it to be. Though the symbols of the season are not here we have merry memories of Christmases at home. Not even a war can take them from us. These evenings I have sometimes thought that here across an ocean somehow our Christmas is dearer, even more real to us than yours. It is something you will never know, some intrinsic feeling that cannot be captured in so many words. For us it is a season without a dress rehearsal. Strip from it everything---in its utter simplicity it is still Christmas.

But here we are around a warm fire harmonizing the final chorus of Silent Night. We talk quietly. No one is selfconscious or embarrassed to speak of the things that mean the most to them. We decide to pass an imaginary Aladdin's Lamp, each person making one wish for the season. It must be a selfish wish or else the musing ceases because there is only one unselfish wish throbbing through the minds of people over here—as Alice Duer Miller puts it:

“That peace has come at last—that all wars cease
How beautiful on the mountains are the footsteps
Of the messengers of Peace!”

The lamp is passed. A girl from Minnesota speaks. It is such a tiny thing she asks for—one glistening snowflake perched haphazardly on apine bough. A college dramatic enthusiast would like to see Mary at the Manger pantomimed by candle light. One of a large family longs for “children's faces looking up” after the opening of the first present. Another rubs the lamp so she can teeter tiptoe at the top of a ladder to place a silver star on the peak of just any Christmas tree. A small town girl would like to feel the sting of the winters night air against her cheek and join in a hilarious rendition of Jingle Bells as only sleighriders can sing it.

The lamp is in my hands. It seems the others have wished on the essence of all that is Christmas. And yet no one has taken mine. I shall always remember that Christmas began with a Mother. My wish is that I could look upon the faces of all mothers, mine especially, and see that misty smile that makes a room radiant when their families are gathered about them. It is a smile made soft, not by the lights of a Christmas tree in a darkened room, but by time and a feeling that glows deep down in their hearts.

And so our evening together becomes a sacred memory. It will never be a forgotten Christmas.
The very merriest to you—

The lamp is out-----
Sev

ENVELOPE

(Sender) J. Severance
APO U.S.A.

(Addressee) The Greene Family
Newtown Lane
E. Hampton Long Island

(Postmark) _____ Postal Service January ___ 1946

CORRESPONDENCE (handwritten – American Red Cross Stationery)

December 28th

Hey Greenes _____

Whee! Take one grand glorious guess. It is coming home!! I sail tomorrow – dock at Seattle within 33 days – clickety-clack it to San Francisco – am paid off – and then

2

four days cross country to New York.

Considering going on the trip to Canada – that is if I don't find myself a job for the summer. Tell Liz and Bill to grit their teeth, make the guest room bed and expect a visit from me early summer.

Anchors aweigh
Sev

ENVELOPE

(Sender) The road to Tuscon!
Sev

(Addressee) The Greene Family
Newtown Lane
E. Hampton Long Island

(Postmark) Tuscon, Ariz

CORRESPONDENCE (Hotel Sir Francis Drake Powell at Sutter San Francisco stationery)

Feb 1, 1946

Dear Greenes__

I'm stateside, juggling along on a pullman as you can see by the worse than usual writing. In lieu of coming directly east I have done Frisco, Los Angeles and Hollywood and am now on my way to Mexico. I'm traveling with another "lunatic" from overseas. Our familys think we're (undecipherable) but we'll probably never get to the Golden West again – so why not? It all came about in one of those moving situations. Visualize no setting at all other than that of

2

two isle seats on a bus. I leaned over and said, "Let's go to Mexico!" She said, "Let's!" That's all there was to it. It being much cheaper to fly, we worked on that angle. Reservations go right on through March so here we are on a pullman, headed for Tuscon Arizona, hoping to get train reservations from there to Mexico City. As we travel we practice Spanish and make out lists of side trips by bicycle and touring car that we will want to make out of Mexico City. Being in uniform eliminates formal dress of any kind. We have Mack (undecipherable) for bicycling. If plane reservations back home are impossible we're going to see what we can do on one of their fruit freighters

3

to New Orleans.

Going down to Mexico City we decided to take the route from Nogales along the west coast, making stops when we get the urge. If we run out of money in Mexico we are going to get jobs modeling sombreros because they cover up most of our faces.

Being in America again is wonderful. I realized now that in my own little quiet way I was madly in love with my country. And it isn't just the tall glass of milk with

4

every meal!

This is the life! I'll be a pauper when I get home. Carving a quiet comfortable living will be a bit prosiac—but there things shall be. Due to the time element I must eke out every bit of the picturesque country of "Mehico" so by taking notes and typing off a long letter when I finally reach Buffalo, New York, I can give you that vicarious feeling of having come along with me.

Until then---penny post cards

"Sev"

CORRESPONDENCE

'Round about now!

My dear Greenowich

Much to catch up on so I'll back track. On the bus from Los Angeles to San Francisco (we bumped the bow at San Pedro) I plunked my badeedee in an isle seat. Just across from me sat a kid I had gotten pretty well acquainted with the last two weeks of the voyage home. Listing to leeward I said, "Are you the unconventional type or are you going to take the straightest distance between two points home?" In answer to the first she said, "No" and in answer to the second she said, "What's your trouble, Bubble?" I nominated Mehico. She seconded the motion. We went. We initiated our pillar-to-post philosophy of travel; Nogales, New Mexico. Settling down with a Mexican family we proceeded to investigate various dots on the map down there. When the \$600 began clanking in our pockets in the form of nickles and dimes we high tailed it by plane for home.

After acknowledging the brass band and "welcome home" orchid strewn train station, I dashed to 593, missed Mawthaw and Fawthaw Severance on their respective cheeks, grabbed another suitcase and zipped off to Syracuse. I, among a few hundred others, am being considered for one of the thirty appointments—room, board and tuition for two years—in the graduate school of student personnel administration. Brass was allotted to the Severances before the days of rationing. Had to have a whirl at it. If they don't consider me a good investment I am going to powder my hair and apply for an assistant principalship in a highschool.

This didn't quite end my tripping around. I trekked over to the dear old alma pappy and was the guest of the Archies for a week. Don drove me down and we called the B.C.'s and the Archies and had them meet us in town for a dinner party. Then back to the Park for me and honestly Grin, I had a wonderful time all week. I lunched with Mae Henna, lectured in Mabel's Eek Geog class, scrimmaged basketball with the juniors, teed with the Holmeses, spoke at the women's club and had a good old gab fest over a few beers with Earl in town. This will remind you of the rabbit story, but Mrs. B.C. did it again. This time, a girl. I have an idea they're going to keep it until they have another boy. Gad, what a capacity! Dr. Blyley and I had anything but a congenial talk. It might very easily result in my not getting the Syracuse appointment. She is set against it and had, for once, the honesty to say so. She doesn't like Archie and the fact that I was staying up there didn't help. Anybody that doesn't like the Archies is completely out of their head so I just chalked it up as a slight but violent case of insanity.

End of Act II

Act III

Time: Now

Place: Ye Homestead

Condition: Broke!

Which brings me to a sickening declaration. I hadn't planned on Mehico. I blew all I had saved while overseas except a few hundred which paid off my income tax. Knowing Pop Severance and his financial view point, I had to get me a summer job. It begins June 25th and ends August 18. I see you and Gimp have had to plan for July, so that lets me out. I'm sick about it but that's what I get for playing Mrs. Rich-Bitch for two months. My job is at Keuka as head waitress for the summer conferences. I will supervise the kids who wait tables. Other than meal times the rest of my day is free. I can swim, tennis and boat.

I also may be able to have the use of the library for any research I may want to do. If an act of God should shove your vacations up into the end of August, for pet's sake wire me.

A fellow I banged about with overseas is flying from Seattle in a few days to talk of church bells and brides maids. I wrote him the appropriate letter about a career et all. You can't be subtle with a man in love. You have to hit him over the head with a ball bat. So he's coming anyway. I am much too in love with my freedom. I am definitely not in love with the man. Tell Gimp, she was right. I should have married Earl.

In my present state of pauperhood, I can't see a trip to New York. But if anyone should be driving down that I can clamp onto, I'll give you a buzz. Tell Mrs. G. to save out of a pair of clean sheets.

Hi, to the whole darn family, cats, dogs and chicks.

Nuf fur now
"Sev"