

You have heard my counsel; store your treasure where I have said; the way of its reaching heaven I do not mean you to know. Put it in the hands of the poor; give it to those in need; what matter to you how it reaches there? Shall I not deliver what I am given? Have you forgotten my words: *When you have done it to one of the least of mine, you have done it unto me?*

Suppose that some friend of yours had vats, cisterns or other vessels skilfully made for storing wine or oil; and suppose yourself in search of somewhere to hide or store your produce. He might say to you: 'I will store it for you.' He would have secret channels and passages to the vessels, and through them the liquid visibly poured would travel invisibly. Again, he might say to you: 'Pour out here what you have'; and you, finding that this was not the place where you thought to put it, might be afraid to pour. But your friend, knowing the hidden workings beneath his grounds, would surely bid you: 'Pour it and set your mind at rest; it passes from here to there; you cannot see how, but you may trust me; I am the builder.'

He by whom all things were made has built mansions for all of us, and lest we should lose our goods on earth he would have them go before us there. If you store them on earth, tell me for whom you gather them. You have sons, you answer. Number one more among them; let one portion be Christ's.

Translated by WALTER SHEWRING.

REFLECTIONS OF A REFUGEE

It is the last hour before Ash Wednesday. Only a little while ago I said the Office of Compline, and the calm of prayer is still upon me. The day has been heavy with many duties, but I was glad to bear them. There is so little we can suffer for him who suffered so willingly for us. The fire on my left is burning steadily. It will have to last the whole night, for we are fire-watching, my companion and I, and it is my turn to wake. She is sleeping peacefully, this dear young girl, and her gentle breathing is a solace to me.

I have been thinking of many things to-night, my friend, and my heart is very full. Here I am fire-watching, waiting for one of my people to come and bring destruction upon your people, to ruin their

homes, mutilate their limbs, even to kill them. The first time I was in an air-raid I was lying flat on my back in a strange bed and the aeroplanes were droning overhead. I knew they had come for a fell purpose, and I thought of the untold thousands who were threatened by a similar danger both here and in Germany. As I opened my heart to their sufferings I could believe for a moment it were possible to embrace both countries with an equal love. For one night at least in the face of that deadly menace, I seemed to bear the agony of both, and there was neither friend nor foe, only a communion of suffering under a mighty cross.

The moment passed. My heart was too small to live the promise of that night. How swiftly the unity begotten of a common danger and suffering shared is torn asunder, leaving but the sweet memory of a fellowship, which, I believe, must be akin to the union of the saints in heaven. When the danger is removed and life slides back into its accustomed groove differences assert themselves again, and what seemed one is shattered into fragments.

No, my friend, I cannot recapture the feelings of that night. Even if my will were strong, I should ever despair of doing justice to two countries. The human heart is too small to admit a double allegiance. I was right, forgive me for contradicting you, but then you did not know the whole truth, I was right in calling myself a fraud, as long as I pretended to be what I was not and never could be, one of your people. Though I am living in your midst, speaking your tongue, endeavouring to do my duty by you as best I can, I remain an exile. I live that life which men of old did dread far more than death itself. Though I may forget at times, there remains a dull throbbing pain, and the heart cries out for the things which are past, the sound of familiar voices, speaking my own tongue, the crisp air of the mountains, the charm of music, the keen flavour of philosophical debate. I do not think I am mourning my lost youth. In many ways my life is far richer now than it was then, and your country is a goodly place to live in. Some parts of it are as beautiful as mine. Your people have virtues which mine so sadly lack. Life in England is a wider and more balanced thing. For all that, it is not home. This argument is incontrovertible.

You need not tell me that my home no longer exists. You need not remind me of what National Socialism has done to my country. There is not an hour of the day that I am unaware of it. I know that my relations are scattered all over the world, that the minds of my friends are distorted and warped, that those whom I most admire are suffering infernal tortures. I have not forgotten that there are concentration camps, that churches are desecrated, and that vileness

disfigures the face of Germany like a loathsome disease. Do you think it is nothing to me that the soul of my country is being ruthlessly destroyed? When I see your little ones at Benediction, the unfortunate millions of German children who are kept away from God are always before me. And now my people have brought the curse of war upon the nations, piling' hatred upon hatred, till it would seem that all their blood would not suffice to expiate their crimes.

Why am I telling you this, my friend? Maybe sheer weariness has loosed my tongue, for at times I am very weary, and my courage would almost fail me. Maybe I am seeking the consolation which lies in sympathy. Yet I would fain be alone with that burning shame at the degradation of my country. Maybe I want to explain why this passionate love of Germany has taken hold of me.

There were times when I thought my country meant nothing to me, when, absorbed in the present and its manifold attractions, shutting the past out of my conscious life, I endeavoured to stifle my nostalgia. I would not think of my relations, I would not think of my friends; I could not. Do you know what it means to be told that your best friend, with whom you shared everything, has been warned not to continue her active foreign correspondence? And I rebelled against fate. Why recall what is irrevocably past? Does not life still hold the promise of achievement? Thus I might have argued, had the process been at all conscious. But it was not. I did not realise that all the time, I was shrinking from the pain, which a full acknowledgement of my position was bound to bring. At all costs I had to keep up the fiction that a real future in your country was possible.

I did not want to be one of those uprooted people with no country and no home, for I knew even then, that there is no poorer thing, and no greater danger to a State or nation, than uprooted man. A careful gardener may be able to transfer his plants from one bed to another. The human plant which is torn from its home and planted in new surroundings is bound to be stunted in its growth, even if it does not wither away altogether. The human being is a member of a nation, brought up in its traditions, imbued with its spirit, and fashioned into the likeness of its greatest sons, and thus we are meant to perform our duty in this world. Even as a nation fares best, when the individualities of its members are fully developed, so the well-being of the world is best safeguarded, when each nation is allowed to bring its own and unique contribution. But uprooted man, who is no longer embedded in a community, lives his life, as it were, in a vacuum. Being isolated, he is weak, and even if he

possesses great gifts, he will lack the response which only a real community can give.

This is the fate which befalls the exile who is not content merely to earn his living in another country but wishes to do service to the utmost of his capacity. Cut off as he is from the past, unlike those who seek consolation in the purely negative contemplation of this past, he will seek with all his might to enter into the life of the country where fate has placed him. This is almost impossible. It is all but impossible to build up those associations which, to such a large extent, make up the spiritual atmosphere of a country. Names which conjure up definite pictures in the native will mean nothing to him. Events of the past, especially if there has been a war between the two countries, will be viewed from an entirely different standpoint. The honest seeker of truth will be baffled at every corner. Continually he will be forced to revise his opinions, until he will either give up the search for truth altogether in despair or force himself into an interpretation of the past in the light of his new experience, which will be as prejudiced as the one he has just discarded.

Then there is the difficulty of living together with people of different temperament and different traditions. At first, as long as the adventure of the new life holds us enthralled, these will be overlooked. But as time passes and the first enthusiasm dies down, these differences will make themselves felt. The exile can take nothing for granted. He cannot rely upon the instinctive knowledge of his kind, acquired in years of life at home. He cannot know beforehand, how people will react in his new country. In the beginning he will feel as if he were all the time throwing a ball into space, not knowing how it will be received, whether it will be returned. Only by long and often painful experience can he arrive at that ease in social intercourse, which comes, at least to the normal native, perfectly naturally. Lastly the exile will suffer from that uncertainty, begotten in a sensitive mind, as to his right to live in a country not his own. Though he may meet with much kindness, the very anomalousness of his position will force hesitation and doubt upon him. Whatever he may do to disguise it, the fact remains that he is a beggar at a rich man's table, and he knows it.

It was a dark hour, when it dawned upon me that a future, such as I had visualised for myself in this country, was not possible. But even then I was not yet ready to accept the past with all its implications. I still shirked my duty to my own country. I still tried to dissociate myself from its terrible present, and refused to bear my share in the responsibility for these terrors. They grieved me so deeply that I dreaded to think of them. At last, however, the day

came, when the fear of this suffering no longer bound me. The pogroms of November 10, 1938, taught me that. And for nights, whenever I awoke, I would think of the poor tortured victims in the concentration camps and wonder why I had been spared. In a childish way, I even tried to prepare for a similar fate, for I knew I was as innocent or as guilty as they. Little by little I was drawn into that community of suffering, in which lies the sole hope of the world.

In measure as I became ready to assume my share of responsibility for National Socialism and all the evils it has brought upon the world, these things became clear to me, and a path into the future began to show itself. It was as though a twofold task lay before me, for which my past experience seemed to have especially fitted me. Could I not attempt to interpret our problems and difficulties to your people, and at the same time approach their solution with the knowledge and insight acquired in England? Thus I might be able to serve both countries, and though working first and foremost for my own people, yet render unto yours that service, which both gratitude and respect would demand.

I am not sure whether I have learned to love your country, for love is a silent and a timid thing. She has nothing in common with the rushing whirlwind of passion or the nimble frolics of fancy. She weaves her web in the unfathomable depths of the heart. So it may well be that in future years I shall feel a lingering sadness at what I have lost on leaving you. Perhaps, among the ruggedness of rocky mountain peaks and the blackness of endless forests of firs, I shall miss the mellow curves of the downs and the misty haze, that blurs every outline, softening all rough edges and casting a veil of promise over the simplest thing. I know I shall at times miss your people and their gentler ways, and the notes of my own harsher tongue will grate upon my ear. I shall miss your sense of human dignity, and that strange mixture of child-like simplicity and maturity, which makes me smile, for all that it commands my admiration.

I have learnt many things in your country my friend, far more than I can easily tell. Above all, your people have taught me to appreciate the value of friendship, though I should never have learnt from them the lesson of love. I think I shall ever look upon you as friends, whom I admire and respect, to whom I owe a great debt of gratitude. But you will always hold a second place in my heart.

The first place belongs by right to my own poor misguided people. Believe me, they are not bad at heart. I have played with them, I have studied with them, I know their deepest aspirations. Alas, they are weak and easily led, they follow a vision and stumble by the

wayside, they lack moral courage and shirk responsibility. And they are proud and brutal, with the pride and brutality of the young, who know neither discipline nor discrimination, and in the exuberance of their growing powers, trust too much in their own strength. Thus they are an easy prey to the devil, who works havoc through them, exploiting their weakness, and sapping their strength. I refuse to believe that my people are thoroughly bad. No nation is. Surely, their past achievements in so many fields holds a great promise for the future. Often it would seem to me as though the very greatness of that promise has made it especially difficult for them to combat those temptations to self-will and spiritual pride, which so persistently assail the gifted. However that may be, they are my people, and I am prepared to stake everything on the hope of calling them back from that path of destruction, which they are so recklessly pursuing. How this is to be achieved, I cannot tell you yet. But it can be done,

This is not folly. I know something of the nature of the foe with which I shall have to contend, the stony walls of indifference, the culpable ignorance, the immobility of the great mass. And at times I feel like a child advancing against a vast army. But you know, better by far than I, the power of steadfast resolve, born in the depths of the heart. You know what human weakness aided by grace can achieve.

My whole life I have longed for a task, which would demand all the strength that is in me, all that wealth of devotion, which I know to be mine.

Last night, in the Convent chapel, I saw a path before me. It went straight into a narrow ravine, formed by towering rocks, which cast black shadows on the ground. The rocks looked tall and forbidding. Against them I looked like a spect of dust. I saw myself going towards the darkness with a courage not my own. Without being told, I knew where that path would lead, but I had counted the cost.

X.Y.Z.