

“I Thought Today ...”
August and October 1944

11.8.44

That all men should spend part of their lives as prisoners of war. I have learned so very much and please God profited by my experience. I have learned to appreciate all the little things of life, the things that I have always taken for granted – a good home, good parents, brothers, sisters, friends, and you darling; all these little luxuries that I have never regarded as luxuries before. I have learned self-restraint especially by word – it is so easy to hurt people; I have learned not to sulk, to refrain from sarcasm. I have learned to mind my own business. I have been taught the spirit of true resignation to God’s will; I have learned to suffer mentally and physically without showing it or inflicting it on others – it is grossly unfair to inflict these sufferings on others. I have learned humility – and yet I have been ruthless in my war against bullies. The weaklings always have my sympathy; they have no champion. I have learned to live in very close contact with men whom I disliked intensely; all the rotten things about them have jarred badly but I have conquered it all. I could never have believed this change possible – my method in the past consisted in avoiding people whom I disliked because I considered it hypocrisy to even try to be nice to them. I am more than ever determined to get out of here alive *but* it will *not* [be] at [the expense of] anyone else’s failure.

12.8.44

That freedom is a very wonderful goal. Freedom of thought, of word, of action. Freedom brings a happiness that one cannot appreciate until one has seen what lack of freedom can do to people. I have known this country not a little – the people are slaves, they have *no* freedom of any kind, they have no soul, they belong to the government, they are an unhappy race. A few men rule the masses with a hand of iron. The ordinary people are good; the peasants are simple, kindly folk, yet when they are taken in tow by the military clique they become vicious and cruel. They have no enjoyment out of life. Woman is much inferior in all ways to man in Japan. Tyranny and oppression are hateful and yet these people accept it with their queer philosophy. They accept it because it is disguised as patriotism; because their religion teaches them to accept things that come from above. The freedom I experienced in England was amazing. Free speech; religious freedom; everything free and easy. “An Englishman’s home is his castle.” No one ever interferes. No one is interested in what his neighbour is doing. Freedom is surely worth fighting for – the Poles thought so; the Irish did too; English freedom was threatened in 1939 and now they are still fighting to maintain it. Pray God they will grant more freedom to others – that freedom which they so generously guard with their lives. Oh! to stretch out my arms to the heavens and look into unbounded space from an Irish hillside and breathe that one word, “Freedom”!

13.8.44

About that divine passion called Love. Many people do not believe that love exists at all; they think that it is an exaggerated liking plus a lot of imagination. Love must exist. True love is not mere sex; not mere beauty love; not just companionship. Beauty is always present whether beauty of form or beauty of mind and character. Companionship is necessary too because the object of love is marriage and procreation – two people have to live together for the rest of their lives. The sexual side of love is essential because it is the fulfillment of love. It must be gentle and not savage; it must be loving and kind and understanding. These must be natural when true love is present.

When two people love they will do anything for one another; no sacrifice is considered too much to make. Nobody is perfect and temperaments will clash at times but God gives us the grace to overlook these things in the sacrament of marriage. He gives us self-restraint and patience. The troubles of one partner are gladly shared by the other and so they are more easily borne than alone.

One does strange, mad things when one is in love and yet one is barely conscious of anything unusual in one’s conduct. People have said that love is a form of madness – maybe it is but it is a very sweet form of madness. Free love could never be a success – society would crumble and so would the state. The foundations of the society and the state are the family and the home. When these cease to mean anything then the former will crash. God in his wisdom and the Church by His holy guidance has laid down certain commandments and precepts which keep marriage, love, and the home sacred things – not just the playthings of man to be treated lightly. Divorce too is the curse of modern society – men tear asunder whom God has joined together in holy

matrimony. Homes are broken up under the slightest pretext. What a horrible fate for the children of such wedlock! What is to become of them.

My idea of perfect happiness is two people – an Irish Catholic man and woman – deeply and truly in love and living together in perfect harmony – and living up to their religion. There is no home on earth to compare with that home; there is no happiness like their happiness.

Love should not interfere with one's occupation in life. Love

October 1944

What civilisation and Christianity has done for our womanhood. Woman has been raised aloft to a position equal to that of a man. The old idea of woman's inferiority is now a thing of the past. Do women nowadays really appreciate this fact? Many of them want to go farther. They want to replace man as the breadwinner; they want to be independent of him. This has bred that awful abomination of the masculine type of woman who struts around in trousers, smokes, drinks, and in general apes man's humanly(?) traits. They have lost all that feminine charm and simplicity which endears them to man. Every man wants to make some particular woman the queen of his home, the mother of his children, a companion for life whom he can love and cherish. He wants his wife to behave as a woman and his lover and as a mother. How sad it is to see a so called modern mother who rarely even sees her children but leaves their rearing(?) and upbringing to a nurse. It is not fashionable for the mother to have many children or to look after them. It is undignified to be seen walking out with her child in a perambulator.

I know that my wife will love her home and her children; that she will never be ashamed of that home or those children. I will not expect her to spend her entire life in our home looking after me and our children. That is unreasonable. She will never be a drudge or slave if I can prevent it. There is a happy medium between a wife who spends all of her time at home and one who is never at home.

If only women in Christian countries would fully appreciate this emancipation which Christ has bestowed upon them. They would love their homes better and be better wives if they did; nor would they want to imitate man in his daily life. Oh if they could only see the women coolies that I have seen – in India, Malaya, and Japan. It is revolting to see them do the work of a navvy. A few yards from where I sit writing there are hundreds of women working on huge piles of pig iron – very heavy work for a man even. And strapped to their backs are tiny infants being jostled around in an unhuman way.

In this country people never marry for love and yet their system seems to work alright. But they are an unhappy people. The women make ideal wives *because* they consider man to be a very superior being and so they just slave for him from morning till night. They will suffer any kind of indignity at the hands of their husbands. They expect their husbands to be unfaithful to them when they are parted – a wife will even supply the money so that her husband can be unfaithful while away from her; but she is the most faithful woman on earth! These people state that the secret of the country's great success in the field of battle is because the soldiers have no ties with home or wives. They are discouraged from writing home. Maybe they have got something there.

An Englishman going off to the war leaves his comfortable home, a loving wife and children whom he adores. It is only human that he should want to return to those he loves; may be he will do anything to keep alive and forget the crusade upon which he is engaged – to fight and die, if necessary, for his country. He is more likely to take the easy way out if he is ever thinking of his home and his family. On the other hand he may realise he is fighting for his country, for its honour, for his own honour, and for his home. Surely this is the warrior "par excellence". A Japanese soldier goes out to fight and die for his Emperor because the high one has ordered it. They are taught to consider death very wonderful, because after death they will be worshipped as gods!

May be an Irishman fighting for his country is the ideal to be aimed at where women are concerned. He leaves his wife and his home; he has a passionate love for his country and for freedom. He will go out and fight to the death for his wife, his home, and his country; he will think death a hard thing but he knows his duty and it is a sweet consolation. His wife loves him, but she will rejoice that he has done his duty to her and to his country. She considers it a great honour to have a dear husband who has died for his country.

The Catholic ideal of womanhood is the only one which leads to an ordered social state. Woman has equal rights with man in the eyes of the Church. But in a home the husband is the head of the house. This does not mean that the husband is a tyrant and the wife is his slave. No! they share and share alike in everything and decide most things concerning their home and family on an equal and mutual footing. But every unit of the social order *must* have a head and the head is the husband the breadwinner.

A woman's place is in the home and until the world at large returns to this old-fashioned idea the sooner will there be more real happiness in the world.

A woman can have feminine charm and be a home lover; but oh what an ornament she can become and a hopelessly impractical wife. Still some men prefer the “doll” type. Well good luck to them. Woman is a creature to be adored and loved by the opposite sex but she must have a practical side or else her home will be chaotic.

All white women should pay a visit to the East – to see the lordly Indian husband preceding his wife along the road, she heavily laden and he, carrying ‘nere a thing!; to see the slaves women are in Malaya and Japan. What a rude awakening it would be and what better wives they would make when they return home again and settle down.

A woman’s place is in the home.

Reason is reasonable. God is reasonable. Good reasoning requires for its basis true first principles.