

FALLS ASLEEP DURING BLITZ

Writer 'Worn Out' During Week of Eruptions by Man and Nature.

By WILLIAM H. STONEMAN
Times Foreign Correspondent

LONDON, March 23.—It's pretty wonderful how much violence you can see here and there around the map in the space of a week nowadays.

This last week has been even bigger and better than usual.

One week ago we were practically bounced out of bed by one of the roughest raids the Germans have yet made on Naples.

As usual they missed just about everything but the water but a few bombs dropped right in town and everybody agreed, until the next morning, that it was a whacker.

The next morning, just one week ago yesterday, everything that had gone before was reduced to the status of small beer by the bombardment of Cassino. We stood on a hill just 3000 yards from the town and watched our bombers drop 1400 tons into the rubble of the already ruined town and then we watched the artillery plaster what was left with 72,000 round of "ammo."

Nature Stages Show

It was grandiose and at the same time it was sickening.

That bombardment continued to steal the limelight until last Saturday afternoon, when nature took a hand. We were tooling along the Autostrada between Pompeii and Naples, about 4 o'clock, when what had been an amethyst sky suddenly took on the texture of a mud puddle.

After behaving itself for nearly a year, Mt. Vesuvius had decided to go haywire again. That night, from a villa across the bay, we could see a great stream of red-hot lava oozing its way across the northern shoulder of the mountain and by dawn, when we got up to take the plane to England, it was pouring down the northern slopes. When we flew by it, in mid-morning, the whole mountain seemed to be smoldering.

After that, Tunis, Bizerte and Algiers seemed like oasis. Algiers was almost back to normal and looked just about as it had that morning in November, 1942, when Neddy Russell of the United Press and I took a bus into town from El Bier, a couple of hours ahead of the troops. Somehow or other, Algiers seemed to have gotten back into the hands of the French and it gave you a good feeling to see it that way.

Even the grim fastness of Gibraltar looked more like a summer resort than a fortress in the balmy sunshine of Monday afternoon. If we had not talked to some Spaniards, who had not forgotten 1936 and who were contemplating a return engagement with Mr. Franco, the war would have seemed a million miles away.

Lady Picks Sprouts

England was enjoying its usual weather—it looked pretty cold and grim after sun-kissed Italy and North Africa. We found ourself gazing intently out of the window of a crowded train and we looked to see what we had been looking at, there was a lady picking Brussels sprouts in her garden. We had almost forgotten that Brussels sprouts existed after 17 months in the south.

London was jammed with American troops and we began to understand a British officer friend at Cassino who said: "If you see an Englishman in London, give him our best regards."

The inevitable happened early yesterday morning. We were just falling asleep after a meager £3 (\$12) dinner at the Ecu de France when the sirens sounded. And we learned what folks had been talking about when they had said that the London barrage was terrific. We listened to it for five minutes and then fell asleep. Enough is enough. Copyright, 1944, by The Indianapolis Times and The Chicago Daily News, Inc.

INSTALLATION MEET SET BY O. E. S. UNIT

Daylight chapter, O. E. S. will install Mrs. Jennie Moreillon as worthy matron and Samuel B. Hoffman, worthy patron, at ceremonies at 7:30 p. m. Saturday in the Masonic temple, North and Illinois st. Other new officers are Mrs. Adah Julian, associate matron; John Julian, associate patron; Mrs. Nellie M. Young, secretary; Mrs. Agnes Singer, treasurer; Mrs. Margaret Stone, conductress, and Mrs. Clara Zobbe, associate conductress.

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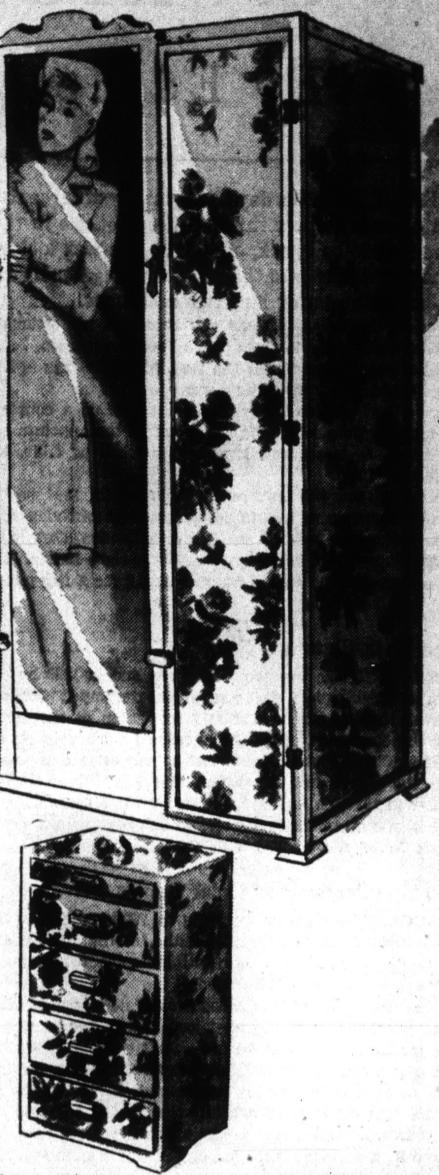
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