

FALLS ASLEEP DURING BLITZ

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

By WILLIAM H. STONEMAN
Times Foreign Correspondent
LONDON, March 22.—It's pretty
wonderful how much violence you
can see here and there around the
map in the space of a week now-
days.

This last week has been even big-
ger 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 Nap-
les.

As usual they
missed just about
everything but the
water but a few
bombs dropped
right in town and
everybody agreed,
Mr. Stoneman 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 bom-
bardment 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 Sat-
urday afternoon, when nature took
a hand. We were tooling along the
Altostada between Pompeii and
Naples, about 4 o'clock, when what
had been an amethyst sky sudden-
ly 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 oases. 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
Elbiar, a couple of hours ahead of
the troops. Somehow or other, Al-
giers 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 Gibrat-
ar looked more like a summer re-
sort than a fortress in the balmy
sunshine of Monday afternoon. If
we had not talked to some Span-
iards, who had not forgotten 1936
and who were contemplating a re-
turn engagement with Mr. Franco,
the war would have seemed a mil-
lion 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 ourselves
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 al-
most forgotten that brussels sprouts
existed after 17 months in the
south.

London was jammed with Ameri-
can troops and we began to under-
stand a British officer friend at Cas-
sino who said: "If you see an Eng-
lishman 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 talk-
ing 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.
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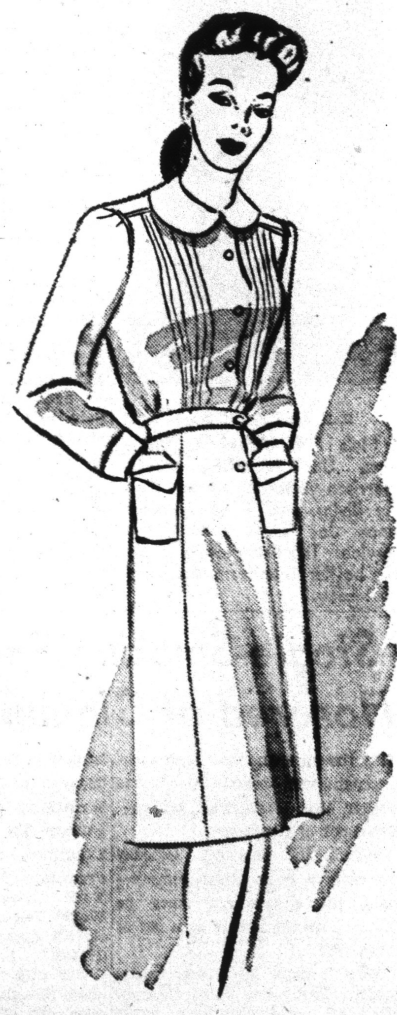
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