

Telegrams: 'NATINMED HAVER, LONDON.'

Telephone: HAMPSTEAD 2232.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH,
HAMPSTEAD, LONDON, N.W.3.Whitsunday. May 28th 1944.

My dear Michael.

This day, being a Sunday and a holiday and my birthday, I intend to dedicate to my friends in the North American Committee and ^{so} perform a social duty which, mainly through lack of time but sometimes through lack of heart, I have sadly neglected ~~to~~ in these trying war years. I think that those of us who have been right here in the last four and half years have been, almost to a man, bad correspondents. The reasons I give above: the strain of labour and lack of anxiety have made letter-writing a difficult task.

Yet, you on your side have been nearer in spirit to us over here than ever before. This came out in a remarkable way a few weeks back when Avery's latest paper reached us: his interest and pleasure and keen satisfaction, to his many friends and here, of his triumphs, showed, as little else has done, how near our thoughts are to you on your side. A few of us met for some time before in the Royal Society's apartments; but it was Avery and his work, and our memory of him and his father, kindly, hospitable nature, which filled our hearts & minds

Of the great tribulations through which we have passed, I shall write
soon. Some day, and I hope it will be soon, we shall speak
of them as one to another, undivided by vast distances of sea & land.
Our uneasiness was nearly complete - a perpetual monument to our
desire to live at peace with all men. 1940 was a time, to an
adult Englishman who has been through the last war, which beggars
description. I got my family out of London into a house I had taken,
a year before ^{in the Chiswicks} (immediately after the Austrian Anschluss) and I went to
live with Dale at the Institute. We slept in the beautiful ground-floor,
in a part of the old library, taking our turns at fire watching
by night and not sleeping by day. Yet the Institute kept going,
in spite of our having so many of our staff to the services.
Until about the middle of your life was not pleasant, especially at
night, in London town; and even here, where we only got the
trains and the bus stops at the railway termini, disturbed
right for time when he ruled. Curiously, it was Hitler's attack on
Russia which brought us, here in London, the relief; because I
think we felt he had reached himself, got his
hand job, and that henceforth he would have other things to
do than the indiscriminate bombing of London. As he was it
has worked out that way. The worst, of course, which brought us
the greatest sense of relief was the coming of your mighty, inevitable
country, into the Allied cause. I remember vividly the same sense

MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

Telegrams: 'NATINMED HAVER, LONDON.'

Telephone: HAMPSTEAD 2232.



NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH,

HAMPSTEAD, LONDON, N.W.3.

of relief in the last war. The two words, to me at least, were curiously alike: I knew that the Allied cause would conquer and prevail; however long the end might be in coming, there could only be one end, and we knew that it would be. It meant nothing but a home soon, but whereas before there had been anxiety and sometimes even doubt, now there was certainty of success and hope. Looking back, we sometimes wonder what, in a remarkable speech, has been the most outstanding feature and work. One thinks of Dunkirk and all the tragedy that went before and with it: the pitiful lack of men and warlike material: the defencelessness of our island in that crucial year. But, when we come to it, I personally note the conduct and bearing and behaviour of the ordinary Londoner - the Cockney dweller in mean streets, poor in his world's goods, but rich, beyond the description of ordinary men, in the possession of courage, unselfishness, humour, good fellowship, helping his less fortunate neighbours, putting up with discomfort, exposure almost daily to physical danger, - all without a murmur of complaint. His home - or his neighbour's - might become a heap of rubble; but

they could get a little Union Jack from somewhere, but I can't
knicks and, with a jolt and a mile, forced to live with me
another, and make the best of it. The thing had to be seen
to be believed and understood; and it will take the best of a year
to deal adequately with this aspect of our island story. The
Londoners - and by this I mean the foreign citizens who lived in
the districts near the river - have surprised the rest of this countrymen
and made a name for himself which will never die. The way our
food supplies have been managed I rate very highly, as every body else
does. Luxuries displaced almost at once, but, thanks to your
Cabinet, enough of the essentials have always been here - a bit
scarce at times, it is true - and every citizen has had his share.
There has been no starving or, as I have, and no striving
for things, food supplies, to which the individual citizen is not
entitled. We have seen a dull and monstrous diet for a long
time, but we have had enough; and enough in the scientific
"nutrition" sense, to maintain this nation in remarkable health
and vigour. It has been well done by our Ministry of Food:
the land married women have had more than the ordinary workers,
the milk (in short supply) has gone to the children, the sick and
the expectant and nursing women. This Ministry - and our
Government - have made a few mistakes, but the Ministry can
in the street has felt that the State was trying to give him a square

MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

Telegrams: 'NATINMED HAVER, LONDON.'

Telephone: HAMPSTEAD 2232.



NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH,

HAMPSTEAD, LONDON, N.W.3.

deal, and, on the whole, succeeding. The public health, like the public morale, has been maintained at an extraordinary high level. There was an increase in C.S.M., but thanks to chemotherapy, the fatality rate is nothing compared with last war: there is an increase in T.B. among young fish & young women which is disturbing; and there has been an increase in V.D. But, in nearly every other disease, there has been an actual improvement in the health of the people. This is, in fact, unique; and I consider it the fact that epidemic after epidemic - influenza, measles, etc. - which, by all the rules ought to appear, do not appear, because we are practically cut off from Europe. The story of the maintenance of the public health of our people in this way will read like a romance one day.

As for personal matters, Dale left this Institute nearly two years ago, having reached the retiring age. He is as active as ever though, and divides his time between being President of the Royal Society, Director of the Royal Institution (he has succeeded to the office held by Dany, Zuckow, Dewar and Bagg) and he holds some very important and responsible positions in connection with the scientific aspects of our problems. Harrington succeeded Dale as Director of this Institute, and you can imagine

The thrill of pleasure which his gave is all of a kind, it is the same. I have had Bismarckism as my main interest. We feel about it that it shows his unique manner with him, and there is a little reflected glory. I see Harnett daily, and in spite of all his handicaps - short stalk, inadequate buildings, the interest and turmoil of war conditions, the fact that those of us who are getting on in years (I am 63 today!) are rather tired and not fresh and full of vigour - he is making a great success of his job. For myself, I have had a multitude of jobs which have covered me over - Tetanus antitoxin and tetanus toxin vaccines and many:

active immunisation against diphtheria: gas gangrene antitoxin, rabby and many: penicillin standard and unit and, now, additional production. Some of it has been interesting, all of it exacting. Of course, I have had to keep my Department of Bacteriology and going; and since December ^{was} ~~was~~ I have had to supply the whole world with at least 30 standards established by the League of Nations. My wife came back to the laboratory and really helped me out. I have failed - I hope only momentarily - in my attempt to get international agreement (i.e. this country and the American continent) about a standard and unit for Penicillin: but I think this will come, for I think it here can only be done, as Dale is more actively interested in the matter.

I enclose a note from Olga to Mr. Michaelberger. I have asked her to give you the names of the girls. Elizabeth is always thrilled when you letters come and she sees the stamps. She is a WREN and is at sea - on the sort of job which boys would give their eyes for. We all send our love and regards to you all, remembering those holiday days in England and hoping for a quick end to the war so that we can reunion them. Very yours,
Priscilla Harker.