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from: - Miss U. M. Rowse,
Poores Hill,
Oxford.

Boars Hill,
Oxford.

13th May, 1944.

Dear Sandy,

My pen is just wonderful, and thank you a million times for it. As you can see, it is in use now, although my writing isn't awfully good. However, this is because I'm lying on the couch, and nothing to do with the pen at all — the pen is just a honey.

At the moment I'm confined to barracks and have been so since last Tuesday. I managed to find a B. Coli bug, & so I have been on Sulphonamide drugs, & of course, while on the drugs work has been forbidden. I haven't had to stay in bed, but I have just been lying around in the sun & altogether having a grand time. I haven't felt at all ill,

and it has just been a lovely holiday for me. The only effect of the drugs has been to make me sleepy & a bit dyspeptic (hell! how does one spell that anyway?)

I've stopped taking the wretched things now anyway, so I expect to be starting work on Monday.

I think Mummy will be glad when I do go back, because I have had the American forces programme on the wireless all day & every day since I've been home, till she's nearly gone bats!

The past two days I've done a lot of sunbathing & my back's really brown, which is most unusual for me. I had fully intended to get a shade browner today, but although it is very warm, it is pretty overcast & I'm afraid there's probably going to be a thunder-storm.

Sunday (contd)

I went to the theatre last night — my first time out since Tuesday. It was a very good show called "Last of Summer". We all enjoyed it very much, but we wept buckets as it was rather sad. It was quite exciting to be out again — I felt as though I had been out of civilization for a great length of time.

Mayorie, Audrey + Freda (a girlfriend who is staying for the weekend) are at the moment having a quick game of Tennis before lunch, but I have been forbidden any violent (?) activity such as that. However, I've been twice as energetic instead, climbing to the top of the lilac tree, to get masses of lilac to arrange in the house — the best lilac is always right at the top of the tree.

Monday

I'm back at work again, and it is a real shock to my system. Alec was very glad to see me again & enquired sympathetically after my health, which made me feel a great fraud as I looked disgustingly healthy.

Audrey & I went to a Bach Chorus practice tonight and both of us are thoroughly exhausted as Tommy Armstrong made us work like blacks. We have only two more rehearsals before the performance and there still seems to be a great deal of imperfection. However, as Tommy encouragingly said before our last concert "Don't worry about the notes - just let yourselves go - the audience won't know if you sing it all wrong!"

Tuesday.

As often happens with my letters, this one appears to be developing into a diary. Thank you for the magazine which arrived yesterday, it was very sweet of you to send it, and I found it most interesting.

I had intended to go to bed early last night, but I ended up by going a great deal later as Daddy & I started looking at maps in the study & forgot all about the time. He was pointing out possible developments in the Pacific. It was some time since I had looked at a large & complete map and I found that in my mind's eye all the various battle fronts had become divided into separate sections

and I had almost lost my idea of the war as a whole and the relation of the various fronts to one another. I found that in many cases my geography had been vastly inaccurate and I felt greatly annoyed with myself for having been lazy enough to be contented with the inadequate sketch maps of the various sectors supplied by the papers.

Good heavens! That was quite an outburst — I apologize.

I have a guilty feeling that perhaps I should do a little work.

So — goodbye for now,
and thank you again
for my lovely pen.

Yours,

Valerie