Excerpts on collaborators, the terror of the German presence, & the final pages of the book on the Maquis (French Resistance) and the arrival of American troops.
The owner of the local drugstore is what they call a collabo, that is one who wanted to collaborate with the Germans, there were quite a few of them and they are getting less and less but there still are some and he is one. A German said a nice thing about that. It was in Paris and it was over a year ago it was in the beginning of '42 and he was talking to a group of French people who had met about some question of protecting French works of art, and he said the French are a pleasant people and I like them but they none of them have three qualities they only have two. They are either honest and intelligent, they are either collabo and intelligent or they are collabo and honest but I have never met one who was collabo honest and intelligent, everybody laughed and it is true there is no such thing as being collabo honest and intelligent. Well the drug store man was collabo and honest but certainly not intelligent. He had already been sent a coffin and other attentions and the other day the Germans went to his house to make a search. Of course he was terribly upset. Apparently someone to tease him sent an anonymous accusation against him to the German authorities giving the detail of explosives that he had
concealed in his premises. As they always investigate these accusations and as naturally they do not know the local political opinions they examine which is natural enough. The unfortunate man went to complain to the gendarmerie, and of course they told everybody and everybody roared with laughter finding it an exceedingly good joke, on all of them.
In the nineteenth century we all became accustomed to permanence. Permanence was natural and necessary and continuous. Permanence and progress were synonymous, that seems strange but of course it is natural enough. If things are permanent you can believe in progress if things are not permanent progress is not possible and so the nineteenth century believed in progress and permanence, permanence and progress. And now. Well now there is neither the one or the other. England and Germany who strangely enough are more nineteenth century even yet than any
other part of the globe do still hope to believe in permanence and progress, progress and permanency, but nobody else does and nobody else is interested in their believing in progress and in permanency, nobody else.

In these days January forty-four, here where we are, we are once more as we were in nineteen forty—we have the terror of the Germans all about us, we have no telephone, we hear stories and do not know whether they are true, we do not know what is happening to our friends in Belley, except for the life of this village of Culoz we seem separated from everything, we have our dog, we have the radio, we have electricity, we have plenty to eat, and we are comfortable but we are completely isolated and rumor follows rumor, and on the road for the first time now in two years we meet automobiles with German officers, motor bicycles with Germans on them going by quickly quickly, and at the station are long trains of railroad trucks marked Italy, and Munich and Breslau, and we none of us know why, why this little corner of France which is so very peaceable should be harassed. In the newspapers they say it is Savoy but actually it is not, in Savoy they can telephone they are peacefully left alone and here one little town and another little town is surrounded and the principal inhabitants are taken away and nobody knows why, nobody can think of any reason for it, what is the reason for it, nobody knows, and those who do it, naturally do not say so that makes it that nobody knows. Why. Nobody knows. The young men are getting restless, they stand around and laugh and their fathers and their mothers are very nervous, but the young men just stand around and watch them go by, and they laugh, they laugh at them, and it does seem as if it were not they that are being sought, but others and older and why. Nobody does know why. Nobody can go in and out of Belley, such an innocent town, and for so long there has been a German garrison there, learning its military lessons, and nobody interfered with them and they did not interfere with any one and now they came and surrounded the town and took fifty men away and nobody knows, nobody knows.
have all fled, there is nobody left except the mayors the maquis and the Germans, it is really very funny, the mayor on his way to Bourg saw the armored train that we had seen at Culoz lying peacefully in a mountain stream at the side of the rails, naturally it never did get to Lyon.

It is wonderful the Americans just chasing around France, everybody used to say, if they only would hurry if they only would hurry, but now they all laugh and they all say but they are hurrying you bet your life they are hurrying up. And Saint Odile, she did say that when Rome fell it would not be the end but the beginning of the end and then she said that the Mohammedan sickle moon and the Christian cross would shine together in peace and look at Turkey, well well, as the Englishman who does the propaganda in English from Berlin always says, well well.

It is nice that the forces of the interior the French are helping things along so well, it makes all the French people content that they are taking part and everybody is happy and gay.

When bread is the staff of life then we eat bread and butter yes we do eat bread and butter.

I remember when I was young and in a book we had with illustrations there was one where the Goths and the Vandals threw around and broke all the works of art in Italy, and I remember being terribly worried about all this destruction and then one day when I felt very worried about it all about the destruction of even more ancient monuments in buried cities I suddenly said to myself well after all there are miles more of works of art that even people who are really interested in them can see in their life time so why worry. But now with Florence being destroyed and Normandy and marching on Paris they are near Chartres to-day the Americans and it does kind of make one feel funny really feel funny it seemed endless this occupation of France and now there they are the American tanks near Chartres, dear me oh dear me it does make one feel funny.

Here we are so excited and rather querulous with waiting except that our minds are pretty well taken off our troubles by our own local excitements, we still have our fifty odd Germans in the region but they are frightened and they stay where they are they were in a village near by to buy some wine and the maquis heard they were there and they came along and shot dead an officer and two soldiers and now well naturally the village is frightened the maquis go away but the Germans well they are afraid to come back but now they have an evil habit of sending over five or six airplanes from Amberieu near Bourg and they drop bombs on a village, three days ago they did this completely wiping out a village and killing most of the population and almost every day these six odd German airplanes come over our heads, and what will they do, this we do not know, but something horrible that is certain.

Besides all this and which is really most exciting are the Robin Hood activities of the maquis. Night before last they came into the town, and they visited three of the principal shops whose owners aided and abetted the Germans and from one they took his car and fifty thousand francs from another they took all his hidden provisions quantities of macaroni and oil and twenty-five thousand francs and now all the rest who have either profited or been for the Germans are naturally most nervous. The maquis are using this money to help the villagers whose homes have been burnt by the Germans. They say the friends of the Germans should pay for the victims of the Germans. And then there are the shop keepers who are on the border land between friend and enemy and they are frightened, and then there are the type of old grumblers who always find everything the young generation do frightful and naturally they have talked too much against the maquis and they are worried and then there are the decayed aristocrats, who are always hoping that a new regime will give them a chance and they are the most furious of all against the defeat of the Germans they and the decayed bourgeoisie, who feel sure that everybody but themselves should be disciplined, I had a row with one of them on the street last night and my parting word in a loud voice was that she should be more charitable, using it in the American sense of charitable in thought, and the whole population laughed because
she is notoriously not in deed, and everybody thought naturally I meant that but of course I did not. Then there is a very funny thing about the church bigots, they are all for the Germans, the clergy in general in France not, distinctly not, but all the old men and women who are known in France as the frogs in holy water or the mice of the sacristy they strangely enough considering how the Germans have treated the catholics in Germany are all for the Germans. It is like in the last war all the pacifists were for Germany. I used not to understand but I am beginning to now. The feeling is that all that makes for liberty and liveliness is D Fāa... those that either by weakness or by strength want to suppress the others and so the Germans who are the Germans who are the arch-disciplinarians because both of their weakness and their strength they want to stop liberty so those others who want liberty suppressed because liberty is a criticism of them are pro-German.

It is funny really funny, the maquis have taken charge of Culoz, they have put up notices under the heading of the fourth republic telling the population what to do and all the time there are twenty-five German soldiers at the station as frightened as rabbits, they stay out only long enough to buy their provisions and retire back to their station, across the river there are still fifty to two hundred but nobody does seem to pay any attention, the maquis do not even take the trouble to gather them in, but they will so they say and put them to work. I like their calling it the fourth republic, the French dearly love a new form of government, they do love a change, they might have thought that the third republic was just going on but not at all there was an in between, the dictatorship or the oligarchy of Vichy so you just could not have it the third republic it has to be a fourth republic. There have been so many these last hundred and forty years, I think I have counted them once already in this book, three different varieties of monarchy, two empires three republics, one commune one oligarchy and dictatorship, and now here we are at a fourth republic and everybody is pleased. It makes them feel gay and cheerful. The German captain who left with the hundred and fifty soldiers was driven to Lyon by one of the taxis from Culoz, the taxi man came back and he said the German captain cried when he said good-bye, he said he had been so happy in Culoz and had hoped to once more see his wife and children but now he was ordered to Normandy and of course he cried and expected the French chauffeur to sympathise with him. They certainly are a funny people they certainly are.

Alice Toklas has just commenced typewriting this book, as long as there were Germans around we left it in manuscript as my handwriting is so bad it was not likely that any German would be able to read it, but now well if they are not gone they are so to speak not here, we can leave our windows open and the light burning, dear me such little things but they do amount to a lot, and it is so. They have left Florence, that is something to the good and everybody cheers up, they are now expecting it to be all over by the fifteenth of August. The French like to set a date it cheers them, but it does seem rather soon, they all also say that in this region there is an English colonel and fifteen Canadian officers, but are they, sometimes we believe it and sometimes we do not. If they are here it would be nice to see them.

There are the Germans still here some forty odd but we never see them in the village the way we used to, why not, I asked the mayor, he twinkled he said they sleep all day, because they mount guard all night, they are afraid I said like rabbits he said. Everybody is so pleased that the overbearing Germans are afraid like rabbits, everybody is pleased.

Even though the Germans are still here the maquis have taken over the victualing of our town as they have done in all the region, they are distributing lots more butter and cheese than there was. They take all that was being prepared in the dairies for the Germans. Look said the cook excitedly, it is butter done up in tinfoil, oh it was prepared for those dirty Boches for the evil birds and now we have it come quick Madame and taste it. She is keeping the tinfoil as a sacred souvenir, the first spoil from the enemy. Ah she said they made us cry since forty and now they cry. Naturally it is difficult to get medicines, even the Germans have not much of that so
the maquis cannot take it from them so everybody is going back to old herb remedies. The old people are always being consulted to remember what they did when they were young, for bruises you use wild verbena pounded and for disinfecting and reducing swelling application of the petals of the Easter lily preserved in eau de vie and foot baths of boiled ivy.

Just how I do not know but the French workers in Germany commence to come back. How they get away they do not say but in the last few days three of them have come back. And they describe Germany as she is.

And just to-day we are most awfully excited because the allies have just made a landing in the south of France and we will be on their way up and it is most exciting. One woman just told me that she had two spare rooms and although it was Assumption and a holiday she was immediately starting to fix them up for the first American soldiers, and the whole population wants to learn English and quickly.

As I was saying some forced workers in Germany have made their way back, you never do know how the French do it but they always keep wandering back and apparently without very much difficulty, they decide that they want to come home and they come.

As I say their descriptions of Germany are funny. They say the civilian population still stupidly believes in victory, they have not changed but that the army is completely discouraged, and besides they are comforting themselves by shooting their officers, it would seem that Hitler has ordered that any soldier should shoot any officer or soldier whom he heard talking against the government, and say the French naturally any soldier who has a grievance has nothing to do but shoot up the man against whom he has it and say it was because he spoke against the government and then instead of being punished he is congratulated. And moreover the German army is beginning to mutiny, so these French boys say, but as long as the civilians still believe in victory Germany will not give in. The thing that fills all the French in Germany with horror is the way the Germans treat the Russians, women as well as men,
have the Germans come back but no there was a little tricolor cheerfully waving from the front, and everywhere the cross of Lorraine and the tricolor painted, and it was all gay and cheerful not German at all. I heard to-day that Captain Bouvet is the chief of this region, he was a nice man, he and I in the darkest days of the war used to have long conversations on the cold winter days between Belley and Billignin, being cheered by the battle of London being cheered by the Russian entrance being cheered by being cheerful, and of course I did not know he was mixed up with the maquis, until just before the Germans left Belley they tried to catch him and his son-in-law but they managed to hide away not too difficult there in the mountains, and the Germans did not get him, he was a retired army officer who had specialised in the chemical side of explosives so naturally he has been wonderful in stopping all railroads and destroying bridges, and now everybody can know that he is he and it is a pleasure.

But really you can understand how the Germans could never have had colonies, when you see these isolated pieces of the German army get to be like hunted rabbits as soon as they are not winning, they are always frightened even when they are winning the most and you really had to be in a country occupied by them to realise it and if you are always about to be frightened you cannot impose yourself upon primitive races. Unless there were a lot of Germans about they never moved without a gun on their back and that was before there were maquis. And this is undoubtedly true, how could they ever be a dominant race, just how could they. Everybody is so cheerful now, they are all making their little flags for the allies everybody the farmers even in the midst of the harvest, the wives are taking time to make flags. Very nice, oh so very nice, we can have our windows open, and everybody is cheerful. The poor people of Aix-les-Bains with their five hundred Germans back again, it is too bad, but it is better and the Aixois know that, that they were unable to get away, even if they have for a little while to have them back again. All the men young and old want to be in it they are all for being up and at them, they are very envious of those who already joined up are in it, and the French troops landed in the south and now oh how they all want to be with them.

This morning just before dawn we were all awakened by the rattle of tommy guns and magazine rifles, but they did not last, it seems that the two forces of the maquis did not connect and so the coup did not come off, but all through the Savoy the Germans are giving themselves up and those across the river said that they would like to perhaps they will and then we can be peaceful with the maquis until the Americans come, then that will finish the book the first American tank and surely it will be coming along, one week or two weeks the pessimists say three weeks nobody expects it to take a month, and they are thirty kilometers from Paris it is an anxious moment, dear Paris, we saw it escape the Germans in fourteen and now forty-four.

To-day we were for the first time in company with a real live maquis, we were in a taxi and he came along to go to Culoz, and we were delighted, he had the tricolor on his shoulder and looked bronzed and capable, we are Americans we said, yes we know he said, and we solemnly shook hands and congratulated each other, he was a captain in the maquis, and he had been a prisoner in Germany, had escaped two years ago and went back to his job in the water-ways and bridges and joined the maquis and has been working with them ever since, we were all pleased, but everybody is pleased these days, one can hardly realise how strange it seems to see everybody smiling and everybody is smiling.

The maquis were pretty wonderful of course now they are armed and more or less superior in numbers to the Germans they attack and besides they are sure of victory but when they first began to block the German transport system, they were practically unarmed, they were inferior in numbers, they were often betrayed by their compatriots and still they managed to cut railroad lines block tunnels blow up bridges, and besides all their other troubles they had to receive the material sent them by airplane and get away with it and hide and manufacture it and use it all in the face of a
WARS I HAVE SEEN

heavily occupied country with enemy guards all along, and the poor maquis many of them hungry and cold and not too favorably regarded by many of their countrymen, it was a kind of a Valley Forge with no General Washington but each little band had to supply itself with its own food its own plans and its own morale. We who lived in the midst of you salute you.

While I was walking yesterday evening as I passed through a village little voices came out of the dark saying are not you afraid of the curfew Madame.

On the other hand the little boys who have been playing at being maquis in odd corners and in secret now play it in the open streets, with red white and blue on their shoulders their fathers' war helmets on their heads and their wooden mitraillettes in their hands, when some one asked them what would you do if the Germans came back. No Germans can come back. Everybody is waiting, they say it goes so fast it makes them feel as if they were at a cinema. They have completely forgotten that they used to moan and say if they would only hurry. And besides they are so very much better fed, not in the big cities alas, but here in the small towns, the maquis, are doing all the policing, they have announced formally that the Vichy government does not any longer function and that they are the government, and with the assistance of the mayor they are going to feed and police the population. Already we have had supplementary butter wine and cheese, and now they are here the people are talking wildly of supplementary white bread and sardines but that is decidedly premature, anyway the maquis are now in command it puts its notices up on the mairie it sends the town crier around with his trumpet to announce what we are all to do and everybody is pleased because it is French and easy, and conversational and all who want can gather together and talk it over. I was coming up the street I heard a man saying yes before the war of fourteen, well yes they can go back to talk about before the war of fourteen it has come now the middle of August to be as peaceable as that.

It is nice to be free my gracious yes and now we have had our little battle and it was this way. The Germans had left Culoz and they had all gathered together across the river at Vions there were then between two hundred and three hundred of them. About a week ago the maquis decided to take the bridge away from them and get them on the move but there was some difficulty about the signals, they all have to come down from their mountains and there was some mistake. Two Germans were killed on the bridge but they were still there. Yesterday in broad daylight they got a gun up on the hill and attacked the bridge, they first had to warn away the little boys who were bathing in the pools of the Rhone and two women who came along after were wounded a little bit, and then the maquis rushed the bridge and it was most exciting, six maquis attacked eight Germans killed two and the others ran away, in the meantime eight German airplanes came along from Lyon but they did not help their comrades in distress they just went on their way to Germany and we have not been seen again. Just a little while and the Germans got away as fast as they could. The maquis put the flag on the bridge and sent round to the mayor to tell the town crier that the bridge was in the hands of the maquis and nobody should cross it, then came the night, the maquis gathered from all sides attacked the fleeing Germans and killed anywhere from fifty to eighty of them in the marshes, the nephew of our baker killed five and the butcher boy killed four, the Germans were trying to escape toward Aix-les-Bains, but there others of the maquis pushed them back and it became a regular rabbit drive, the weather was hot and the Germans were in a bad way there in the marshes, some tried to surrender but others of the group fired and the maquis killed them all, every one, and then they came back, and everybody was happy and they said everybody must put up flags so we all rushed around trying to get flags, and our general store who had been a well-known collabo unearthed from his stores a quantity of French, English and American flags we got one nice one and in the meantime the maquis had given the mayor a nice big American flag and it and the French flag were hung up in front of the mairie and we were very moved and Mrs. Mayor was
teaching all the children to salute the flag to say vive la France et honneur aux maquis. It is rather wonderful when you think that a quantity of little children had never seen a flag never, the Germans never had flags and of course there were no French ones allowed, and the little children go up and touch it timidly, they never have seen a flag. What a town everybody is out on the streets all the time, and in between time they sing the Marseillaise, everybody feels so easy, it is impossible to make anybody realise what occupation by Germans is who has not had it, here in Culoz it was as easy as it was possible for it to be as most of the population are railroad employees and the Germans did not want to irritate them, but it was like a suffocating cloud under which you could not breathe right, we had lots of food, and no interference on the part of the Germans but there it was a weight that was always there and now everybody feels natural, they feel good and they feel bad but they feel natural, and that was our battle, the maquis are all down there at the bridge they do not think the Germans can come back, but they are watchful, there was firing just now but it did not last, so it was probably a false alarm, we like the maquis, honneur aux maquis.

They say that six of the wounded and killed Germans escaped into the mountain and they look for them from time to time but as they have not found them they take it for granted that they are dead and gone. It is wonderful to pass the railroad station and see the block house that the Germans had built to defend themselves already gone the barbed wire already gone and the children playing around where the Boches had so solemnly been standing with their guns all ready to shoot any one. The employees of the railroad are very busy, they are getting everything ready so that the railroad track can be all mended and trains will be able to go as soon as France is free, well it is free but not completely free, in Lyons and Chambery the two chief towns the maquis are still fighting the Germans, but soon yes soon now we can say soon.

Everybody is so pleased with the maquis taking Vichy, everybody is so pleased with the joke that they have pretty well forgotten their rancor against the government, the French certainly are sans rancune, they cannot remember their hatreds very long it is at once their weakness and their strength, but it is nice, a good joke like the maquis taking Vichy and all the government running away makes everybody gay. It is hot and dry most awfully hot and dry but as everybody knows it is good for the fighting armies to have dry weather they put up with it contentedly, even if the vegetables are drying up, tant pis they say, what of it, if we are free. And now there is more distribution of wine and butter and cheese, so why worry.

And now they have just announced on the radio that the Americans are at Grenoble and that is only eighty kilometers away and no opposition in between, oh if they would only come by here. We must see them. There is no way of getting there.

And now at half past twelve to-day on the radio a voice said attention attention attention and the Frenchman’s voice cracked with excitement and he said Paris is free. Glory hallelujah Paris is free, imagine it less than three months since the landing and Paris is free. All these days I did not dare to mention the prediction of Saint Odile, she said Paris would not be burned the devotion of her people would save Paris and it has vive la France. I cant tell you how excited we all are and now if I can only see the Americans come to Culoz I think all this about war will be finished yes I do.

To-night it was just like fourth of July in my youth in the San Joaquin valley, it was just as hot and we all went to-day that Paris was freed to put flowers on the soldiers monument, it had already been draped with flags and the maquis marched down the main street of Culoz, and then everybody stood at attention and sang the Marseillaise, it was interesting to see who out of the population of Culoz were members of the fighting maquis, and then there were another lot of affiliated but not fighting maquis. I like to call them maquis, that was what they were, when every moment was a danger, they had to receive arms they had to transport them and they had to hide them and they had to do sabotage and all the time a very
considerable part of their countrymen did not at all believe in them, and there they were workmen, station masters, civil servants, tailors, barbers, anything, nobody knew but they naturally, and some of them looked pretty tired but my everybody was happy, everybody had the flag on their shoulders and some of the girls heaven only knows how had achieved a whole dress made of tricolor ribbons sewn together, Paris was taken at noon and by eight o'clock all France was putting wreaths on their soldiers monument because of course every village has that, honneur aux maquis, and they say that Americans are at Aix-les-Bains only twenty-five kilometers away how we want to see them even a little more than the rest of the population which is saying a great deal. We found some American flag ribbon in the local country store, and we gave it to all the little boys, just as we did in the 1914-1918 war when America came into the war, we rather wondered whether it was not some left over of the same ribbon, after all there was no particular reason in this little village that the local country store should otherwise have had it, vive la France vive l'Amerique vive les allies vive Paris, and after this most exciting day. Oh I forgot, I naturally wanted my dog Basket to participate and so I took him down to the local barber and I said wont you shave him and make him elegant, it is not right when the Americans come along and when Paris is free that the only French poodle in Culoz and owned by Americans should not be elegant, so perspiring freely all of us including Basket, he had his paws shaved and his muzzle shaved and he was elegant and as such he took part in the evening's celebration and all the little children, said Basket Basket come here Basket, they do say it beautifully and then there was a blare of trumpets and naturally he was frightened and tried to run away, so I tied him with a handkerchief and the effort was not so elegant but we were all proud of ourselves just the same.

We are all exhausted to-day the next day, we were so excited we are so happy we are all exhausted, we just go around shaking hands and being exhausted.

And that is the way it is after all of us being so happy yesterday, to-day they are once more fighting in the streets of Paris, dear Paris and dear dear Paris, but Saint Odile did say it would be all right and although worried well anyway to distract our minds just now while I was in my bath, bang and the house shook I got out of my bath and another big bang, and the house shook, and there down in the valley were volumes of smoke, they were trying to hit the bridges over the Rhone, the cook was screaming and the people flocking into the grounds, and we could see the railroad bridge and it seemed to be intact, but the maquis who were guarding it, well now everybody says nobody was hurt, and it was the Boches flying home because they could not any longer stay in France in vengeance dropped bombs, we saw two lots of airplanes in the air and now they are gone I was afraid they were Americans dropping bombs but nobody believes anything bad of Americans, and perhaps not, anyway we are not as happy as yesterday but to-day is to-day and that is all there is to say.

And now to-day that Paris is really free, this is what Saint Odile did say.

Saint Odile said that the world would go on and there would come the worst war of all and the fire would be thrown down from the heavens and there would be freezing and heating and rivers running with blood and at last there would be winning by the enemy and everybody would say and how can they be so strong, and everybody would say and give us peace and then little by little there would come the battle of the mountain and that was certainly Moscow, because even in the time of Saint Odile because of its many religious houses was called the Holy Mountain and indeed it was there that the enemy received its first check, and then she said, much later there would be fighting in the streets of the eternal city, and Rome taken it was not the end but the beginning of the end (which indeed was so) and that Paris which was in the greatest danger would be saved because of the holiness of its holy women, Sainte Genevieve and now it has been saved owing to the valor of its men and its women and we are all so happy, honneur aux maquis.
It is wonderful to go down to the village square on Sunday evening and to see it full of maquis in their nice shorts and khaki shirts with the tricolor on their shoulders talking to the girls everybody smiling and only ten days ago everybody was staying in the house and the Germans were in the square, only ten days ago, what a week, and nobody is really used to it, and yet it is hard to believe that it was not always so, we have one hundred and fifty maquis stationed in our town and it is a pleasure.

Yesterday I was out on the road and there was a tremendous thunderstorm and I went into a roadside café, there were two men sitting at a table with F. F. I. on their breasts and I said how do you do and Basket and I were very wet, and they said how do you do but not quite like Frenchmen, we talked a little more and then I knew from their accent they were Spaniards, I said I was American and we solemnly shook hands and we began to talk, one of them was the typical Barcelona intellectual he reminded me of Picasso's friend Sabatez, he and his comrade with two hundred and fifty other Spanish refugees have been with the maquis for two years now, since said they we cannot fight for freedom in our own country we fight for freedom wherever we can, they have been at it for ten years now, they know about Hemingway and when I told them that I knew Picasso they stood up and solemnly shook hands, all over again. Then I asked where they had come from and they said Annecy and I said you must have seen my compatriots and they said yes and a woman journalist interviewed them and said to them what are you Spaniards doing here, and when they told her she said she was glad to meet them and that they were heroes. They were going to Artemare to see their wives who were refugeed there and then they were going back to Annecy. If said I you see the journalist again tell her that I want to see her, and I told them my name but they wont remember but anyway it was a pleasure to send word. It is very tantalising Americans all over the place sometimes only twenty kilometers away and we do not see them, how we want to see them and send word to America and have news from them. To-night I was all bitten by mosquitoes trying to get more news of them. I went down to the Pont de la Lois which is the only bridge left over the Rhone, it strangely enough was not destroyed in '40 and now again it has not been destroyed. It was near there that our little battle was fought and it was near there that the bombs were dropped the other day or was it only yesterday. Well anyway I was talking to the maquis that were guarding the bridge, among them a boy I knew in Cezerieu and they told me that a car with American officers had passed over the bridge, when I told Alice Toklas about it tonight she said she would take her typewriting down there and await them but when I told her about mosquitoes she weakened, well anyway, one of the train hands who was also there said that they had received orders to repair the train tracks between Chambery and Culoz and that it had to be done in three days, because he said the Americans want to use it and he promised me that when the first train carrying Americans was signaled, night or day, he would leave all and come up and let me know. Dear Americans how we do want to see them.

It's wonderful in the evening hearing the voices of the children playing, for such a long time they played quietly they were afraid to play in the streets or on the sidewalk but now they are let loose and the elders smile indulgently and all of a sudden you hear a childish voice cry pom pom pom pom pom pom pom pom pom that's that, of course that is a mitraillette killing the Boches, everybody calls them Boches now, and everybody is easy very easy in their minds, except of course those who made money off the Germans, and there are some, and naturally they are nervous. The maquis of course do revenge themselves a little the French are not naturally a revengeful people but the Germans did commit such awful atrocities in the mountain regions that when the mountain boys caught the S.S. troops in Annecy naturally enough they made them parade the town with their hands in the air and then took them up into the hills and there nobody knows what did happen to them, and naturally the young ones who had seen farms burned with men women and children inside them as well as the beasts, when they take a German prisoner they cannot
help giving him a kick in the behind. But the French are not a vengeful people and they will soon now that they feel their strength they will not feel vengeful.

Our friend Monsieur Godet came yesterday and said he was going to try to get through to Switzerland, he has business there, and so we are hoping that he will be able to cable to America for us and tell all our friends that we are all right, he left on his bicycle with a permit from the F. F. I. and once he gets to Saint Julien, the way we always used to drive into Switzerland, he thinks he will have no trouble. It will be nice when he comes back and brings us news of the Americans. We have asked him to bring back with him a newspaper man or a newspaper woman, or two of them, if he did that would be nice. There are American cars and officers that pass so they say from time to time but I have not seen them and of course seeing is believing, because with the population, the wish is so much the father of the thought, but they will come, bless them.

I met to-day Monsieur Burtin whose daughter is at the University of Grenoble and who kept telling him when he worried about her student activities but my dear father you do not understand, this is our war not your war, and now that the F. F. I. have covered themselves with glory she said to her father, you see we were right, to be sure people of your age are less credulous than people of our age, but this time we were right in persisting in our credulity, look at the results, they are magnificent said the father, yes said the daughter you can understand it was no work for veterans.

A little later I was talking to a young fellow who is now in Culoz but whom I had often seen in Belley where he was in the first battalion of Chasseurs before they were demobilised when the Southern zone no longer existed. I had not seen him since those days. So naturally I asked him if he had been in the movement. He said because of his health, his lungs are not very strong he had not been able to be but actually all his comrades in the battalion were in the movement, not the officers, he said, this was not an officers movement, regular army officers did not in general have the kind of intelligence that makes a maquis. No I said, all the army officers that I know who were patriots, all managed somehow to get to Africa and join the regular army, yes he said they did not have the kind of quality that makes maquis, the non-commissioned officers yes lots of them were in the movement, it was said he marvelously secret, you do not know perhaps he said that one of the leaders of the Paris F. F. I. was hidden for three months in Culoz, no I said you know at the time, oh no he said, I knew his sister very intimately but she never mentioned it, how old is he, I said, oh about twenty-four and the Germans got on his track two of the crowd were taken by the Germans but the rest of the leaders escaped, and the two who were captured in spite of frightful tortures did not give their comrades away, after three months they heard that the Germans had lost trace of them so they all went back, and continued their work, now that it is all over his sister told me all about it. And where said I did all the arms come from from that the Parisians seem to have had, oh he laughed most of those have been hidden since '40, not possibly I said, yes he said I do assure you. Well honneur aux maquis, one cannot say it too often, it is nice to have two countries to be proud of that belong to you, mine of course are America and France.

To-day the village is excited terribly excited because they are shaving the heads of the girls who kept company with the Germans during the occupation, it is called the coiffure of 1944, and naturally it is terrible because the shaving is done publicly, it is being done to-day. It is as I have often said, life in the middle ages, it certainly is most interesting and logical it certainly is.

Speaking of all this there is this about a Jewish woman, a Parisienne, well known in the Paris world. She and her family took refuge in Chambéry when the persecutions against the Jews began in Paris. And then later, when there was no southern zone, all the Jews were supposed to have the fact put on their carte d'identité and their food card, she went to the prefecture to do so and the official whom she saw looked at her severely Madame he said, have
you any proof with you that you are a Jewess, why no she said, well he said if you have no actual proof that you are a Jewess, why do you come and bother me, why she said I beg your pardon, no he said I am not interested unless you can prove you are a Jewess, good day he said and she left. It was she who told the story. Most of the French officials were like that really like that.

And now everybody says all the time that American officers are passing through Culoz, you can tell them they all say because of their large hats. Do American officers wear large hats, oh yes they say. Do they, I wonder, or is it only a sort of cowboy idea that the population have. Perhaps the American do wear large hats, we are so eagerly waiting to see.

What a day what a day of days, I always did say that I would end this book with the first American that came to Culoz, and to-day oh happy day yesterday and to-day, the first of September 1944. There have been six of them in the house, two of them stayed the night and then three were there besides the first three not here at Culoz but at Belley. Oh happy day, that is all that I can say oh happy day.

This is the way it happened. We go to Belley about once a month to go shopping and the bank and things like that and yesterday Thursday was the day, so we went over in a taxi, and when we got to Belley as I got out of the taxi several people said to me, Americans are here. I had heard that so often that I had pretty well given up hope and I said oh nonsense but yes they said, and then the son of the watchmaker who had been the most steadfast and violent pro-ally even in the darkest days came up to me and said the Americans are here. Really I said yes he said well I said lead me to them, all right he said they are at the hotel so we went on just as fast as we could and when we got to the hotel they tried to stop me but we said no and went in. I saw the proprietor of the hotel and I said is it true there are Americans, yes he said come on, and I followed and there we were Alice Toklas panting behind and Basket very excited and we went into a room filled with maquis and the mayor of Belley and I said in a loud voice are there any Americans here and three men stood up and they were Americans God bless them and were we pleased. We held each other’s hands and we patted each other and we sat down together and I told them who we were, and they knew, I always take it for granted that people will know who I am and at the same time at the last moment I kind of doubt, but they knew of course they knew, they were lieutenant Walter E. Oleson 120th Engineers and private Edward Landry and Walter Hartze, and they belonged to the Thunderbirds and how we talked and how we patted each other in the good American way, and I had to know where they came from and where they were going and where they were born. In the last war we had come across our first American soldiers and it had been nice but nothing like this, after almost two years of not a word with America, there they were, all three of them. Then we went to look at their car the jeep, and I had expected it to be much smaller but it was quite big and they said did I want a ride and I said you bet I wanted a ride and we all climbed in and there I was riding in an American army car driven by an American soldier. Everybody was so excited.

Then we all said good-bye and we did hope to see them again, and then we went on with our shopping, then suddenly everybody got excited army trucks filled with soldiers were coming along but not Americans, this was the French army in American cars and they were happy and we were happy and tired and happy and then we saw two who looked like Americans in a car standing alone and I went over and said are you Americans and they said sure, and by that time I was confident and I said I was Gertrude Stein and did they want to come back with us and spend the night. They said well yes they thought that the war could get along without them for a few hours so they came, Alice Toklas got into the car with the driver and the colonel came with me, oh a joyous moment and we all drove home and the village was wild with excitement and they all wanted to shake the colonel’s hand and at last we got into the house, and were we excited. Here were the first Americans
actually in the house with us, impossible to believe that only three weeks before the Germans had been in the village still and feeling themselves masters, it was wonderful. Lieutenant Colonel William O. Perry Headquarters 47th Infantry Division and private John Schmaltz, wonderful that is all I can say about it wonderful, and I said you are going to sleep in beds where German officers slept six weeks ago, wonderful my gracious perfectly wonderful.

How we talked that night, they just brought all America to us every bit of it, they came from Colorado, lovely Colorado, I do not know Colorado but that is the way I felt about it lovely Colorado and then everybody was tired out and they gave us nice American specialties and my were we happy, we were, completely and truly happy and completely and entirely worn out with emotion. The next morning while they breakfasted we talked some more and we patted each other and then kissed each other and then they went away. Just as we were sitting down to lunch, in came four more Americans this time war correspondents, our emotions were not yet exhausted nor our capacity to talk, how we talked and talked and where they were born was music to the ears Baltimore and Washington D. C. and Detroit and Chicago, it is all music to the ears so long long long away from the names of the places where they were born. Well they have asked me to go with them to Voiron to broadcast with them to America next Sunday and I am going and the war is over and this certainly this is the last war to remember.