

FOREWORD

by Storm Jameson

AMONG the presents Anne Frank received on her thirteenth birthday, the one that pleased her most was a book with stiff covers in which she began to keep a journal: she had never tried to write before, but it came as naturally as song to a young bird. With a lively unself-conscious interest, she chattered about herself, her friends, the school examinations, the old mathematics teacher, the shy beginnings of a flirtation with Harry, who was sixteen and very pleasant. In these first light-hearted entries she is any well-brought-up, quick-witted child, and even though she speaks about them, it is a little hard to remember that the child is living in abnormal circumstances. But this is Amsterdam in June, 1942, and her parents are German Jews who emigrated from Germany in 1933. Anne wears a yellow star, cannot enter a tram, a cinema, ride a bicycle, sit in the garden after eight—a web of harassing restrictions. It does not press on her; she accepts it with a child's involuntary patience, and the vivacity which tried her teachers. She is attractive, and cannot help knowing it—and is pleased by it very much as by a fine day. Even in danger she is almost wholly a child: when, less than a month after her birthday, the always threatening stroke falls, and the family is forced to choose between obeying the Gestapo summons or going into hiding, the first thing Anne packs to take with her is her journal—then her hair-curlers and her school books.

Her father had been preparing for months a place to hide—in the two upper back floors of an old building, the office of his firm, now run by two Dutchmen whose courage and loyal friendship for the Franks made the attempt to escape possible. In some of these old Dutch houses the rooms at the back, looking on to a garden or a courtyard, can be shut off. Here Anne, her sixteen-year-old sister Margot, and her parents now took refuge, hunted animals burrowing out of sight; they were joined in a few days by

another family, the Van Daans with their son Peter, not sixteen, and later by a dentist called Dussel. They had to take endless care, all day, not to be seen or heard, and for an energetic spirited little girl the life must often have been as maddening as the punishment of being sent to bed on a fine afternoon. Nothing was made easier by the forced intimacy of the two families in conditions which rasped tempers and strained nerves.

What did she do in the long hours of silence and inactivity? She read—books brought by endlessly kind and thoughtful Dutch friends; and she kept her journal, telling it everything she might have told an intimate friend, if she had had one. Hope was an instinct in her. When she admires an author immensely she decides to give her children his books; she finishes her prayers with a movement of joy and gratitude for her safety and her good health, and the beauty of the world: she is sure that God will never abandon her. And if sometimes, like a cold breath, the thought crosses her mind that some day she may be terribly alone, she believes still that what the future promises her is love and happiness. Then comes D-day, and she thinks that in the autumn, perhaps, she will have left this prison of safety and hunger, and be back at school.

She does, indeed, leave it before the autumn, but for a concentration camp. On 4th August, 1944, the Gestapo put its hand on them. Found later in the disorder left by the Gestapo, Anne's dear journal was given to her Dutch friends.

Exactly four months before this, she had written: "I want to go on living, even after my death." She was not counting on her journal to lend her small shade a modest longer existence in men's minds. As it turned out, she had no time to make any other sign before disappearing. But, fortunately for us, it is a marvellously clear image which comes towards us, smiling, from these pages which clumsy murderous hands did not take the trouble to destroy. The door of her hiding-place had closed on a little girl whose irrepressible gaiety seduces the old teacher who punishes her for talking in class by setting her to write an essay on "A Chatterbox." As the months pass, this instinctive gaiety, the liveliness and energy of a child, deepens: she stares from an attic window at a blue sky, bare trees, and the dazzling flash of a seagull, and thinks of that moment of supreme happiness when, as she is sure God meant men to

do, she will look in freedom at these things; she refuses to despair, and by a sort of grace succeeds again and again in believing that what is approaching her is goodness, joy, and the chance to grow and learn. The current of fear, of tension, is always there in her mind, but her imagination, what she calls her illogical gaiety, springs above it. I should like to help you, she says to Peter. But you do that all the time, he tells her, "with your gaiety."

We first see her living in that moment when the young girl begins to press, lightly, no more than half-consciously, on the child's sensibility and intelligence. Now one, then the other, possesses her slight body. The girl who, as we watch, is being born from the eager child, opens her eyes on the walls of a prison, and has to endure the pressure on her of four adults, nervously on edge and anxious, who have no other target for their advice and admonitions. Certainly she is not docile; she is stubborn, full of a childish hauteur, through which pierces, easily, involuntarily, the wish to be good, to be liked, of this same ardent, well-meaning child.

With an astonishing lucidity, and without vanity, she tries to analyse her own and her companions' natures. She is growing up quickly in this forcing atmosphere, too quickly, so that she feels absence and silence deepening round her, and even comes to realise that to use a little hypocrisy would make her life easier—but does not come to using it. Instead she breaks a way through herself to something like calm, and to a half-tender, half-indifferent, and wholly unchildlike patience. Already she is learning the hardest of all lessons—detachment. She is convinced that, young as she is, she will not be tempted to compromise with her life. And, in the same moment when in some recess of her being a voice warns her that she is going to die, she knows that what life demands is a joyous courage, she knows what she wants to do, she had her religion, she has love. Not yet fifteen, she can write: "I feel that I am a woman, a woman who has both moral energy and courage."

The memory, coming to her in a dream, of a certain Peter she adored when she was a small child, evokes in her the shadowy outline of the maturity shaping itself in the freshness and purity of her extreme youth. The dream prefigures her new feeling for Peter Van Daan. Nowhere more than in her story of the love growing between two

young prisoners is her enduring innocence apparent. It is her most shining quality—this innocence, this purity of a quick clear spirit. The never-shaken simplicity of the account makes it a miracle of delicacy and truth. At first sight she had thought he was boring and stupid. Not for a long time, a year and a half, not until after her exquisitely gentle dream of the other Peter, do they begin, with a smiling timidity and diffidence, to draw closer together. He, too, she thinks, is alone. And without any haste or urgency, as if she had in front of her a long life in which she would be able to make, one after another, all the gestures of a slowly-unfolding intimacy, she learns to talk to him: she records, pleased by it, a compliment he pays her, and, always with the same quietness and simplicity, the stirring of her senses when, like children who have been playing, they cling to each other for a few moments.

Yet even with him her lucidity does not desert her: she does not judge his weakness and irreverence, the poverty of his mind, but neither can she help seeing them.

She is modest and ambitious. As one reads the journal, it becomes increasingly clear that she had a right to her ambition. She was a writer born; she is able to evoke, directly and vividly, the few comfortless rooms, and their atmosphere and smells; hours of terror at night; scenes, when all eight persons are together in a room, composed with a lively well-tempered ease—speaking likenesses, but what she has caught is the likeness behind the voices and gestures. It is the ease which amazes. In these scenes the future novelist steps towards us with a modest confidence. The peculiar habits of Mr. Dussel the dentist, who shares her room, the charm of her kind, sensitive, intelligent father, her ironical, impatient mother, her sister's goodness, the irritable, excitable Van Daans—she sees them with a child's unforgiving sharpness, tempered again and again by an adult compassion and justice. And she finds precise moving words for the confused emotions started in her by a day of sun and wind, for the languor of spring in her body, for her sense that she with the others is isolated in a tiny clearing surrounded by immense menacing shadows.

But there is nothing self-conscious, no touch, not the slightest, of showing-off, of acting a part, even before herself, even the part cast for her, of the marvellous gifted child forced to hide from an—alas—imaginable cruelty.

Her lucidity, her extraordinary powers of observation, do not betray her when she turns them on herself. She has no vanity, no tortuous poses. She is candour, innocence, sanity itself. She knows that she is intelligent and ignorant, an ignorant little girl, so little sure of herself that her easiest defence against the deforming pressure of her elders is to play the fool—and, behind it, to go on seeking herself. As if she knew that she must be quick, she hurries along this road. It is less remarkable that the child whose gaiety made her popular at school learns to do without admiration than that she sees so clearly her need to change herself. And can call up a detached understanding and serenity to record, as if they had happened to someone else, her struggles through resentment and despair to reach her present certainty that she is responsible for herself, and the coolness to be able to take in her hand the temptation—Father and Mother don't understand me—weigh it, and put it tranquilly in its place. It is a strengthening, a humbling experience, to watch this child, this young girl, come so far, unfold so richly, in little more than two years. And, as the last entry in the journal shows plainly, she even knew how far she still needed to go to possess herself.

How much farther did she go? She died in the concentration camp of Bergen-Belsen, in March, 1945, two months before Holland was freed, and three months before what would have been her sixteenth birthday.

Let us press just for a moment on the feeling—of stupefaction—that must start in us when we think that, in our lifetime, side by side with the amazing achievements of scientists and inventors, there exist these vast slaughterhouses for human beings, and that, to a number of her fellow human beings, to send Anne Frank to one of them seemed a natural thing to do.

Stupefaction. How could they do it? Is it right to feel stupefied—right, necessary, since, after the first shock of discovering that what had seemed a civilised nation could create a science of cruelty, we begin insensibly to think of the concentration camps as an historical fact, like other facts; and Germans themselves seem able easily to forget what, so few years ago, they were doing—but wrong, unprofitable, to ride off by throwing the whole blame on any nation or any sect. Even the child, Anne Frank, knew this. Human beings made Belsen. What they did there is

what human beings can find in their hearts to do, if they so will. The question becomes not: How could they do it? but: What moved them to do it? What moves men today to justify the concentration camps still existing in Russia and parts of Europe? In short what moves a man to feel such contempt for his fellow human beings that he comes to believe that a Jew or a political opponent may, must, be treated as vermin and stamped out?

A doctrine moves him. Men learned early how to press a doctrine over ears and eyes, so that they could torture without being distracted by the victim's agony. None was ever better shaped for this purpose than the doctrine, exalted in our day, of historical necessity, with its vision of human beings as the instrument through which history is accomplished. Men exist to serve the purpose of history—and this purpose is known to a dialectically trained élite. These privileged persons understand what the logic of history requires; therefore it is their right and their duty to cut living human material into shape. They have the right to sacrifice a generation, two generations, to the future they serve. An administration grappling at speed with difficult social and economic problems cannot afford to be gentle. Over and above their merely murderous side—Hitler's obsessive hatred of Jews—even the German concentration camps were part of the economy of the State. The German élite, though, had a mistaken view of historical necessity: they thought they knew it by sight: they didn't, and were defeated. All that is needed, then, to justify an élite in playing a cruel providence to millions of men and women, is that it should not be mistaken about the end of history.

Really? Is it really certain that, after the cruelty, after the deaths, there will be happiness and a new flowering of the human spirit? Is the end really predictable? Can human beings, if their rulers are only subtle enough, ruthless enough, be moulded at last into the right "historical" shape? If this is true, then a man is nothing in himself, he has no meaning except as an instrument, passive or conscious, of the process of history. How absurd and boring! And to be predictable, the process must be closed; it must be possible for the élite to say: In the conditions we shall establish, a man will be able to fulfil himself, and all the needs and aspirations of his being, at the point in

history where he finds himself. But, if the needs of the human heart are infinite, then the process is not closed, not predictable, and the arrogance which insists that it is will be woefully and wonderfully surprised.

The human reason is able to justify any cruelty, by showing that it is necessary, part of a process, a term in a majestic logic—and the rest of it. We used to point to our reason with pride, as proof and glory of our humanity. Reed I may be, I can think. We know now that our reason is capable of anything. Why did Germans bring about the death of this charming, intelligent, good child? Because they had convinced themselves that they had the right, that in destroying her they furthered aims, a future, they had decided to realise. In the end, our pride of intellect, our enlightenment, comes to be weighed in the balance against one child whom we, for our sufficient reasons, have murdered. Dying, of hunger and misery, in Bergen-Belsen, Anne Frank took with her, into a mass grave, every exquisite intellectual structure which allows its servants to torture, to work to death, to kill, for an idea.

For a little over two years this child worked on herself, with tears, patience, gaiety, with all the energy of a quick mind and a will turned towards goodness. She taught herself a smile of happiness and faith. In all humility, we can—surely?—believe that this smile, this profound smile, was not lost, even in Belsen, even when she could no longer hold out against the arrogance of men without God.

Ik wil hoop ik een jou alles kunnen
haar vertrouwen, zoals ik het nog een
niemand gekunt heb, en ik hoop dat
je het grote steun voor me zult zijn.
Anne Frank, 12 Juni 1942.

“I HOPE I shall be able to confide in you completely, as I
have never been able to do in anyone before, and I hope
that you will be a great support and comfort to me.”

Anne Frank, 12th June, 1942.

THE DIARY

Sunday, 14th June, 1942

On Friday, 12th June, I woke up at six o'clock and no wonder; it was my birthday. But of course I was not allowed to get up at that hour, so I had to control my curiosity until a quarter to seven. Then I could bear it no longer, and went to the dining-room, where I received a warm welcome from Moortie (the cat).

Soon after seven I went to Mummy and Daddy and then to the sitting-room to undo my presents. The first to greet me was *you*, possibly the nicest of all. Then on the table there was a bunch of roses, a plant and some peonies, and more arrived during the day.

I got masses of things from Mummy and Daddy, and was thoroughly spoilt by various friends. Amongst other things I was given "Camera Obscura," a party game, lots of sweets, chocolates, a puzzle, a brooch, *Tales and Legends of the Netherlands*, by Joseph Cohen, *Daisy's Mountain Holiday* (a wizard book), and some money. Now I can buy *The Myths of Greece and Rome*—grand!

Then Lies came to fetch me and we went to school. During break I stood everyone sweet biscuits, and then we had to go back to our lessons.

Now I must stop. Bye-bye, we're going to be great pals!

Monday, 15th June, 1942

I had my birthday party on Sunday afternoon. We showed a film *The Lighthouse Keeper* with Rin-Tin-Tin, which my school friends thoroughly enjoyed. We had a lovely time. There were lots of girls and boys. Mummy always wants to know whom I'm going to marry. Little does she guess that it's Peter Wessel; one day I managed, without blushing or flickering an eyelid, to get that idea right out of her mind. For years Lies Goosens and Sanne Houtman have been my best friends. Since then, I've got to know

Jopie de Waal at the Jewish Secondary School. We are together a lot and she is now my best friend girl. Lies is more friendly with another girl, and Sanne goes to a different school, where she has made new friends.

Saturday, 20th June, 1942

I haven't written for a few days, because I wanted first of all to think about my diary. It's an odd idea for someone like me to keep a diary; not only because I have never done so before, but because it seems to me that neither I—nor for that matter anyone else—will be interested in the unbosomings of a thirteen-year-old schoolgirl. Still, what does that matter? I want to write, but more than that, I want to bring out all kinds of things that lie buried deep in my heart.

There is a saying that "paper is more patient than man"; it came back to me on one of my slightly melancholy days, while I sat chin in hand, feeling too bored and limp even to make up my mind whether to go out or to stay at home. Yes, there is no doubt that paper is patient and as I don't intend to show this cardboard-covered notebook, bearing the proud name of "diary", to anyone, unless I find a real friend, boy or girl, probably nobody cares. And now I come to root of the matter, the reason for my starting a diary: it is that I have no such real friend.

Let me put it more clearly, since no one will believe that a girl of thirteen feels herself quite alone in the world, nor is it so. I have darling parents and a sister of sixteen. I know about thirty people whom one might call friends—I have strings of boy friends, anxious to catch a glimpse of me and who, failing that, peep at me through mirrors in class. I have relations, aunts and uncles, who are darlings too, a good home, no—I don't seem to lack anything. But it's the same with all my friends, just fun and games, nothing more. I can never bring myself to talk of anything outside the common round. We don't seem to be able to get any closer, that is the root of the trouble. Perhaps I lack confidence, but anyway, there it is, a stubborn fact and I don't seem to be able to do anything about it.

Hence, this diary. In order to enhance in my mind's eye the picture of the friend for whom I have waited so long, I don't want to set down a series of bald facts in a diary like most people do, but I want this diary itself to be my friend,

and I shall call my friend Kitty. No one will grasp what I'm talking about if I begin my letters to Kitty just out of the blue, so, albeit unwillingly, I will start by sketching in brief the story of my life.

My father was 36 when he married my mother, who was then 25. My sister Margot was born in 1926 in Frankfort-on-main. I followed on 12th June, 1929, and, as we are Jewish, we emigrated to Holland in 1933, where my father was appointed Managing Director of Travies N.V. This firm is in close relationship with the firm of Kolen & Co. in the same building, of which my father is a partner.

The rest of our family, however, felt the full impact of Hitler's anti-Jewish laws, so life was filled with anxiety. In 1938 after the pogroms, my two uncles (my mother's brothers) escaped to the U.S.A. My old grandmother came to us, she was then 73. After May, 1940, good times rapidly fled: first the war, then the capitulation, followed by the arrival of the Germans. That is when the sufferings of us Jews really began. Anti-Jewish decrees followed each other in quick succession. Jews must wear a yellow star, Jews must hand in their bicycles, Jews are banned from trams and are forbidden to drive. Jews are only allowed to do their shopping between three and five o'clock and then only in shops which bear the placard "Jewish shop." Jews must be indoors by eight o'clock and cannot even sit in their own gardens after that hour. Jews are forbidden to visit theatres, cinemas, and other places of entertainment. Jews may not take part in public sports. Swimming baths, tennis courts, hockey fields, and other sports grounds are all prohibited to them. Jews may not visit Christians. Jews must go to Jewish schools, and many more restrictions of a similar kind.

So we could not do this and were forbidden to do that. But life went on in spite of it all. Jopie used to say to me: "You're scared to do anything, because it may be forbidden." Our freedom was strictly limited. Yet things were still bearable.

Granny died in January, 1942; no one will ever know how much she is present in my thoughts and how much I love her still.

In 1934 I went to school at the Montessori Kindergarten and continued there. It was at the end of the school year, I was in form 6B, when I had to say good-bye to Mrs. K.

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We both wept, it was very sad. In 1941 I went, with my sister Margot, to the Jewish Secondary School, she into the fourth form and I into the first.

So far everything is all right with the four of us and here I come to the present day.

Saturday, 20th June, 1942

Dear Kitty,

I'll start straight away. It is so peaceful at the moment, Mummy and Daddy are out and Margot has gone to play ping-pong with some friends.

I've been playing ping-pong a lot myself lately. We ping-pongers are very partial to an ice-cream, especially in summer when one gets warm at the game, so we usually finish up with a visit to the nearest ice-cream shop, "Delphi" or "masis," where Jews are allowed. We've given up scrounging for extra pocket money. "Oasis" is usually full and amongst our large circle of friends we always manage to find some kind-hearted gentleman or boy friend, who presents us with more ice-cream than we could devour in a week.

I expect you will be rather surprised at the fact that I should talk of boy friends at my age. Alas, one simply can't seem to avoid it at our school. As soon as a boy asks if he may cycle home with me and we get into conversation, nine out of ten times I can be sure that he will fall head over heels in love immediately and simply won't allow me out of his sight. After a while it cools down of course, especially as I take little notice of ardent looks and pedal blithely on.

If it gets so far that they begin about "asking Father" I swerve slightly on my bicycle, my satchel falls, the young man is bound to get off and hand it to me, by which time I have introduced a new topic of conversation.

These are the most innocent types; you get some who blow kisses or try to get hold of your arm, but then they are definitely knocking at the wrong door. I get off my bicycle and refuse to go farther in their company, or I pretend to be insulted and tell them in no uncertain terms to clear off.

There, the foundation of our friendship is laid, till tomorrow!

Yours, ANNE.



Anne Frank



The entrance to the "Secret Annexe" is concealed by the movable bookcase