

Memo to E.P.L. from Esther - Saturday mrg 25th. February, 1950:-

Now that the events and suspense of the past two days are over I feel a great urge to write to my dear E.P.L, for I know that her mind must have been sadly troubled even as my own has been during the past weeks. I would have given much on many occasions to have had the opportunity of one or two heart to/heart talks. But that has not proved possible; and maybe it has been just as well that heart-searchings should have gone on completely unaided, on both sides.

We shall have our talk soon together. In the meantime you and I, having grown so close ly together, intermingling ideas, experiences, and thoughts all through our long and loving association and friendship, understand each other wholly. You will know therefore that I feel this impulse to commune with you, in a sense <sup>deep</sup> of/humility in the confident knowledge that you will not construe it into presumption.

I am wondering what you now think about the election results. The press this morning is filled with talk about "stalemate", "grave constitutional crisis", "another election in few months" "deadlock at the polls" etc. etc. In fact almost entirely looking at the result from party standpoints. But to my mind, whether it prove to be right or wrong, at this terribly critical stage of our history, this is precisely the decisive verdict which our people wanted. That is, to force a halt - temporarily - on both the great political sides, compel them to pause and take stock once again on the life and death issues which confront the world,

and to do just that now, at this cross-road, when the sands of time (during which last efforts could be made) are swiftly and terrifyingly running out. Any moment now it may be too late. In their strange intuitive way, our British folk are so very prescient about all this, though inarticulate in verbal expression. Therefore through their votes they have deliberately stripped overwhelming power by a majority in Parliament from each great party. For the time being, each party will be unable to force through their pet partisan projects on home and domestic issues - but will perforce have to look around and outwards at the annihilating ruin which is threatening to engulf our world. Of course I know that the normal rejoinder to this would be - that this is just precisely what the Government has been struggling to do. I fully agree that has been so. But - the colossal burdens of office, the arrogance and truculence which unchallengeable power engender even in men who start by having the seeds of greatness within them, must surely blind them eventually until they cannot see the wood for the trees. This enforced breathing space I can only regard as a last minute Godsend. Whatever the ultimate outcome, it is what a great many thinking folk prayed for. That is why I, and many of my friends, after much travail of spirit decided to disregard all the talk about the waste of casting a Liberal vote. We knew all the pros and all the cons, and risked the bitterness, and the chagrin of utter defeat for that party, in the fervent hope/exactly what has happened, might happen.

Well may Edward Murrow of the American Broadcasting Company pay the glowing tribute to the British people which he did over the air last night. Underneath all the apparent dross their love of their country is sound and true, and they know instinctively what is best for her: and when I think of 'British people' I visualise all those land workers and yeoman of England, and the voters in the County Boroughs of our Islands who so turned the scale of the election results yesterday, after the first early morning figures had been declared as a consequence of the votes of the great urban cities and industrial regions which had been already counted. Herding and crowding together in our towns <sup>cities</sup> and ~~citizens~~ has not improved the bodies nor the minds of thousands of our citizens, and I am constrained to say that some of the spoon-feeding of our Labour Government has been a source of sad corruption of their characters, breeding ~~the~~ a large group of work-shirkers, and <sup>an</sup> "everything for nothing" crowd of spivs and thugs. But these evil consequences are I suppose inevitable and you have ever taught me to realise that enlightened thinking can come about only by slow and painful processes through generations of time, not minutes, even as the changes in the vast cosmic universe.

I have digressed somewhat, (but we are having a talk together for I am hoping you will find time to send me a note!) so must get back to the bottom of my page 2. Now that we have this unusual situation in Parliament, I am filled with an intense

interest to see what our politicians will do. I consider this will be a test of their true greatness. When a patient is lying critically ill, doctors and surgeons get together and pool all their marvellous scientific, medical and practical skill, to say nothing of adding a little psychology also of their patient and his human and physical make-up. Surely, our politicians should do that now, when their country and their world is in the state which it is at the present time? Why must they shout so much beforehand about "No Coalitions"? 'Coalition' at any time is a word I dislike, and God forbid that I should think they should be arranged at any and every time of crisis, nor that they should go on a moment after their purpose has been served. Our doctors and surgeons split up again after they have killed or cured their patient, and there is no question whatsoever that they should continue the association when they are assured the crisis is over. Why on earth can't our best brains in all spheres of our national life get together again, as they did in 1940? One might almost say things are in a worse plight in 1950 than a decade ago. If we start afresh that way in these islands, who knows how such an example of co-operation may spread out and over into the international world and all over our unhappy globe. Ernie Bevin himself was brought into the Councils of State first in such a way, was he not? Why must the party element be observed at such an eleventh and three-quarters hour? The parties have been created to guard and cherish our democratic way of life. When that is not only in dire peril but on the brink of being engulfed in the utter blotting out of each and every other way of life,

including the very ground upon which that life is lived, for politicians to stand aside and bleat and boast, bully and bluster about no co-operation,<sup>no</sup> interchange of ideas <sup>for</sup> and solutions of well-nigh insoluble problems, makes ordinary common-sense folk sick with shame and puts them in danger of breaking blood vessels in anger and indignation. Until we have seen to it that there is going to be a world in which to go on living, in which to have homes and food and work, fair shares for all, nationalisation or free enterprise or what you will, who in God's name cares whether Labour or Tory or any other labelled party has got more seats in Parliament than the other. We want leaders, MEN who will guide the nation and our world. Leaders who can put aside when it is desperately necessary, all their petty trivial differences of opinions and policies and do their job of leading. Leaders who are of such noble spiritual stature, with great breadth of vision, who are able to show by example and precept to the people that after all, it is not only homes and food and work and fair shares for all etc which we should strive for, but a way of life which touches both deeper and higher levels of living. If the Church has failed and the State is failing, perhaps the wheel is turning full circle and we are travelling back along Einstein's theory to a re-marriage of the two!! The above remark is ridiculous I know, and I did not mean to drop into facetiousness, but I am asking you my dear, very dear E.P.L, where do we go from here? Do please try to write me a letter. All my love comes over to you. Esther.