

## NEWS LETTER

APRIL 1946

Events have moved rapidly at the American Farm School and in Greece since Mrs. Bliss sent out her last News Letter in December 1945, just before her death. Her successor in the New York office as Executive Secretary is Mrs. Hartley, the widow of Rev. Robert Hartley of Rochester, New York. She is a graduate of Wellesley of the class of 1912 and is deeply interested in the kind of work the American Farm School is doing for Greece. She and her husband visited the School in Greece before the war, so she has the background of first hand knowledge of the work she is undertaking. We are glad to introduce her to the many friends and contributors of the School, and to extend to her a warm welcome to this work that is of such vital importance to Greece.

The Memorial Fund for Ethel House Bliss is now \$10,296.00, and the gifts continue to come in. It will be a very substantial help to the school, as well as a beautiful tribute to the love and devotion and rare ability that was given so generously for the School by Mrs. Bliss. Before deciding on the form of the memorial the trustees will await advice from Mr. House.

GREEK ELECTIONS: The Greek Elections which took place on March 31st brought to the School farm a friendly, breezy group of Americans from everywhere. One hundred ten of them with three trucks and 35 jeeps were housed in some of the barracks left on the School farm by the Germans. They were fixed up for AMFOGE (American Mission of Observers of Greek Elections) as there seemed to be no other suitable place for the group. It was a busy time getting ready for them. Mrs. House writes, "Some of the workmen and staff worked all night long for 36 hours on a stretch to get the place ready on time, stopping only for tea at midnight. The AMFOGE, living here at the farm, are now very much at home, and many have become interested in the School, as if they were really a part of it: they are being helpful in so many ways. They are full of jokes and laughter, and pleased with their luck in "finding such a place". They call their barracks the "Grand Hotel".

There are 120 boys and girls in the School on the farm besides all the young people living and working here, and Scout troops camping out every week end. Mrs. House writes, "The boys are eager to learn and full of zeal in the practical lessons with the livestock and in the field and shops." Twentyfive former students of the upper classes returned on February 15 for an intensive course of five months and to receive their certificates. They are so happy to be back. All afternoon they wandered about in little groups looking at the changes in five years. They said to Mr. House, "We are going to help you now." And they will, for they are men now. Some have aged very much for they have been through hard experiences, and are no longer carefree boys.

The School has been allotted, through UNRRA, 2 Guernsey bulls, both young and frisky, one cow and four heifers. A number of these animals are being distributed first to institutions where they can be used to help the country. The School, also has received one big truck and two smaller ones, which help tremendously in the transportation problems on the farm.

A generous gift from the Greek War Relief for rebuilding the School after the ravages of war has made it possible, not only to hasten the restoration of the School, but has given work to a great number of people from neighboring villages, on a conservation project for irrigation purposes. "With their carts, picks and shovels they have moved more than 8000 cu.yds. of dirt, making an earthen dam to collect water from the hills during the rains. It also will be a protection against washing in the fields. There are probably hundreds of villages where water can be collected for irrigation purposes, the work being done with the simple equipment in the hands of the villagers during their free time."



The Girls' School, called KALETHEA for its beautiful view, has a baby to care for. It is a fine chubby little boy, 6 months old, whose mother died at birth. The father could not care for it properly so has loaned it to the School. "All the girls crowded around as they showed him to us," writes Mrs. House, "saying, we all are his mothers. They are taking charge of him in turn, weekly, and have fixed quite a nice room for him. This afternoon one of the UNRRA American nurses is coming out to start a course for the teachers of the Girls' School on the care and feeding of babies and the baby will be brought down for demonstration purposes.

VISITORS: As always, many visitors find their way to the American Farm School - over 400 during the past six weeks including the UNRRA officials, AMFOGE and friends, and groups from the city of Salonica. "One of the biggest events since my last letter," writes Mrs. House, "is the visit of Prof. Frank Bailey of Mt. Holyoke, Mass. (our new trustee) who is on the Mission for the State Department. Commander Bailey was Naval attached at Salonica for eight months after the liberation of Greece and lived at the Farm School. He became deeply interested in the School and its educational possibilities.

BOY SCOUTS: The work that Mr. Theo Litsas has been doing for the Boy Scouts of Greece is of great importance. As Scout Commissioner for Macedonia he knows the leaders, and especially after having them here at the School last summer for training. They very much need his leadership, but without transportation he can't get around very much.

GIFTS: "Packages are coming through beautifully", writes Mrs. House, "and are a great help. The overalls have caused special excitement among the boys. Thirteen of the boys lacked overalls as we had not been able to get enough material for them. Through a friend we had been able to get some sort of white sheeting dyed a khaki color, enough to make overalls for part of the boys, and some were sent from America. The expense of having things made is prohibitive, but the ladies brought their machines, and put in a busy day cutting them out and sewing them up. There were sixteen of us altogether. I gave some of the children the job of sorting the buttons that friends have sent from America and stringing them together. We found that to get enough for 53 overalls would be quite a problem, so two of the ladies brought over the buttons they had collected from soldiers overalls and we have plenty. But the littlest boys who were left without them come often to ask if any have come yet. They are very good about it when disappointed, and say 'Thembarezi' (never mind), but are back again in a day or two to ask shyly if they have arrived." "News has come that the SS WILLIAM PETERELL has arrived in Athens and we hope this means not only the overalls for the boys but the much needed machinery and parts for the tractor for the farm."

To those who helped so generously in sending clothes, overalls, shoes, blankets by Mr. and Mrs. House when they returned and since, Mrs. House writes, "Everyone is thrilled with the clothing and are so grateful for it. Ever so many have come to me to ask me to pass on their thanks to those who thought of them. You can understand better what these things mean when you know that last fall an ordinary man's shirt cost \$100.00 and the making of overalls in a factory cost \$30.00 for one. That does not include the material. But it is not only the actual clothing and food that is sent out, but the thought that friends in the United States are thinking of them, and caring enough to send things to them that helps. It is this sort of caring and giving that will help to build up the kind of international friendships that will assure the peace of the world and the success of the United Nations."

On February 26, Mrs. House writes, "I am sitting in the wide open window in the bright sunshine, birds twittering, sheep bells tinkling softly and that sweet delicate fragrance of the almond blossoms everywhere. Everything seems so peaceful and



quiet and serene. But the workmen demolishing James Hall discovered an unexploded bomb, larger than the one that blew up the building. It is under a slab of concrete which evidently fell in just the proper way to make a roof over the bomb. British bomb experts are coming out this afternoon to remove it - and so in the midst of calm and beauty we are reminded of war." And great are the problems of Greece as well as the rest of the world in the aftermath of the war. Mr. House writes, "Greek national problems are complicated and disturbing and international ones are more so, but I am still convinced human beings want to do the right thing and are struggling for a clearer understanding of the truth." In his broadcast over BBC to the people of Greece on their liberation, October 14, 1944, he said, "I am sure that a new sense of the abiding values in life have been born in your spirits as a result of your trials, and the appreciation of these values will be a source of new power to you - power for the full utilization of your mountains and streams, your plains and your sea, God's gift to you, and may He bless you on this day of new hope."

In this faith, the American Farm School is working with the people of Greece to bring about the day of New Hope.