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NEW YORK CITY

NEWS LETTER

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In our February News Letter we made the announcement that Mr. and Mrs. Charles House were planning to come to the United States. We are glad to state that they are actually here and can be reached through the New York office.

Now to go back to the mid-winter activities of the School. On Jan. 30th Mr. Spiro Tsami visited the School. Mr. Tsami is the Commercial Counselor for Greece attached to the Royal Greek Legation in Washington and New York. The only unfortunate part of the visit was that on account of the legal holiday most of the boys were away from the School planting trees in the nearby village of Sedes. Mr. Tsami, however, was able to see the plant and something of the varied activities of the School.

On February 7th Mrs. House wrote that the foot and mouth disease was slowly abating and the epidemic of influenza was over "and all the boys flourishing".

On February 14th five weeks old Lucy Ann Gardner arrived by plane from Athens with her mother. On the same day the Ladies Sewing Circle met to sew garments which are distributed to needy families by the Patriotic League, the national organization for the protection of children. Mrs. Demeter Hadjis, the bride of last summer, has been the leader of this circle all winter.

On February 19th His Majesty King George II, accompanied by the Prime Minister, spent the day in Thessalonica. His Majesty took time during the busy day to make another visit to the School. In the evening Mr. and Mrs. House attended a reception for the King and Premier Metaxas at the University of Thessalonica.

On February 20th the Metropolitan of Thessalonica called and remained for tea.

On February 24th the English speaking community met for the Day of Prayer service at the American Consulate. Mrs. Charles House was the leader and Miss Bertha Morley, of the Girls Department of Anatolia College in Thessalonica, brought a choir of girls which added much to the service.

We pass on some interesting bits of news that have come from some of our graduates. A graduate of the Class of 1931 is managing a large wheat farm in Thrace. He has planted over 2,000 trees and "hopes to have his place the best in the district". Many of the trees are wild but in addition he has planted 500 fruit trees. Another graduate near Mt. Olympus

is managing a 300-acre farm belonging to a Roumanian. On this he is raising wheat and some potatoes. Theodoras, not far away, is managing the 150-acre estate of a sanatorium for tubercular patients on the slope of Mt. Olympus. He has been doing quite a little grafting of fruit trees.

On March 26th, Miss Elsa Behr of Brooklyn, New York, came to visit the School. Her own description of her visit is so delightful that we give it in her own words:

"I really first came in contact with the School on Friday evening at the church service at 7:30 for Annunciation Day. I was so impressed by the service. The greater part of it was sung by a choir of about eight boys under the leadership of a slender lad who directed them with all the fire and vim of a professional chorus director. They say he had been rehearsing for this service for two weeks, and they certainly sang beautifully. At times the whole congregation joined in. The priest, with tears in his eyes, told Mr. House that he was sure that in all Thessalonica there was not one service that evening 'one seventeenth as beautiful'.

"Saturday evening there were patriotic exercises in the assembly hall. The recitations and speeches, of course, I could not understand, but there was delightful Greek folk dancing.

"Sunday morning rose clear and sunny, and as soon as I saw the sun I hopped out of bed and there was Olympus spread out in all its glory - wonderfully clear, its rocky masses snow covered, and way around to the north a long succession of lower snow covered ranges. It was lovely to wander all over the school grounds. First down to the beautiful little cemetery -- nothing could be lovelier -- then to the piggery with the enormous black hogs and sows, some with litters of 8 or 10 cute little pigs three days old. Then the sheep, the chickens, each banded and with its scientific statistical record. But most beautiful were the cows, quite varied in kind, in their long rows of stalls. Some curly haired ones were larger than any I've ever seen.

"By this time it was time for church. I would not have thought I could get so much inspiration from a service and sermon in which I understood hardly a word. But there was such earnestness on the part of the boys, so much of the litany being sung by the congregation, the priest had such an earnest lovable face, and the teacher who gave the sermon seemed to speak to the boys so directly, that no one at all interested in religion but would be better for having attended the service.

"Then we saw the dormitories, and the kitchen and dining room just as the bell rang for dinner. They trooped in - such a nice looking set of boys, little and big. I am impressed more than ever with the work done here that has such a big influence in the character as well as the future lives of these boys, and through them again spreading to many others."

On April 5th Mrs. House wrote that because of the uncertain conditions in Europe it seemed wise to build an oven on the School grounds. It would be much easier to get flour than the bread needed for the School in case of emergency. As the building of the oven was an unexpected necessity, we are hoping that some kind friends will be glad to help us meet this additional expense of \$500 over and above our budget.

On April 12th Mr. and Mrs. House left for Athens to attend to some last business before leaving for America. Writing about it afterwards, Mrs. House said: "We had an experience on our way to Athens which made the flight of Queen Geraldine and her two days old baby seem very real. As we were driving along through the mountains between a little town called Servia and another called Ellisona, we went around a bend and suddenly came upon a number of cars blocking the road; it was night and we couldn't see what they were at first. Then Mr. House saw that they were Albanian cars. One of the chauffeurs could speak Greek and we learned that they had come through from Tirana and had brought the Queen lying on a mattress in the car; there were 15 cars and two trucks and we joined the cavalcade and moved along with them until we reached Ellisona where we were able to pass them".

On May 2nd Mr. and Mrs. House left Thessalonica by plane in order to catch the S.S. "Rex" at Naples, and arrived in New York on May 11th. They were unable to remain for Exhibition Day on June 3rd and the graduation of the twenty-seven members of the class of 1939. The senior class will remain for two weeks to harvest the grain, which promises to be a good crop.

Miss Myrtle Wright, a representative of the Society of Friends in England, sends the following report of her visit to the School and to the villages to select new scholarship pupils:

"It was intensely interesting to meet the boys, some of the graduates, and a few possible new pupils. It is impertinent for an outsider to judge, but the enthusiasm of the students and the staff, the breadth and thoroughness of your curriculum and the proof of the effect of the training in the graduates, must impress anyone. As far as the Society of Friends scholars are concerned, it seems to me that it is most satisfactory that, excepting those for the time being in military service, all the boys are in agricultural work.

"It is gratifying to find that both present and past students do seem aware that they have had a special opportunity provided by those not of the Greek nation who have the well being of Greece at heart, and that therefore they have a special responsibility to share their knowledge and make a success of their future for the sake of others besides themselves.

"This leads me to say how great is my admiration for the influence that Mr. Litsas has, not only with the boys but in the homes in the villages; the enthusiastic welcome he received and his knowledge and interest in each boy. With him we were taken at once into the family at each place of call.

"My memories of the beauty and interest of Athens will not last longer than those of the villages of Macedonia."

And so ends another school year!

Ethel H. Bliss