

1931

14 St. John's Wood Court.

St. John's Wood. London.

Nov 16/31

N. W. 8.

Dear People.

This is just a line to tell you that we have now a permanent address, as above. We have taken a small furnished flat - "centrally heated" - as they say in this country, which means hot water coils - a rare thing. Most of them have only gas or electric fires. In the oldest houses there is a grate with a miserable moping fire of half a dozen small pieces of coal. This is quite comfy and we have also electric heaters

in case really severe weather occurs so that we
feel we can control the situation. We are
fairly central, just a ferry bus ride from
Seepidge. You turn at that corner from Oxford
St. & go northwest to St. John's Wood. It is much
higher & dryer than Kensington or Chelsea wh.
we had first thought of.

Have been only a week over a week in
London & very rushed, looking for a
house & seeing sights. Three great
spectacles last week. Lord Mayor's
Show which we saw in Comfort from the

Windows of the Palace Strand Hotel where
we were staying - a wonderful place where
you get room + breakfast, bath, boots + general
service for 2.75 per day. No tips. The Low wagon

looked very important in his ancient-old
Coach but the show was somewhat spoiled
by a downpour of rain. However London crowds
don't mind that + the streets were lined with
a six-deep sheet of umbrellas for hours before.

The procession was about a mile long + was
something after the order of our Labour Day
affairs. Floats showing the progress of
industry etc. - first bicycle, + motor car. old

horse omnibuses etc. Then the beef-eaters from the Tower.

Tues. we went to the Opening of Parl. Bice Henidge had written to Col. Varmier, who is the real head of the High Commission Office, & he is simply turning the office on us to get us into things. There is of course a great demand for tickets but he managed at the last moment to get us two for the Royal Gallery. That is a long gallery opening out from behind the Throne through which the King & Queen pass. We saw the Peers & peeresses come in in gold lace & diamonds, & all the processional Ceremony. ~~Beefeaters, Herald~~ Imagine a long Gothic hall with rows of seats rising at each side (where we were) Royal blue Carpet rolled down for the occasion. The Crown & orb in position. Beef-eaters, heralds & Kings Chamberlains all drawn up at each side of the open way. At 10 min to 12 the Crown was solemnly borne into the

Anti-Chambers. Then the Prince of Wales entered & afterwards
Prince George. Then we heard the crowds cheering outside
& the bands playing announcing the arrival of the King
& Queen. & at 12 exactly, on the first stroke of Big Ben,
the heralds blew a blast on their trumpets, the great
doors opened at the lower end of the hall & the Royal
procession entered. The King was leading the Queen
by the hand & they were both dressed exactly as

you see them in state portraits - Great cloaks of red
velvet with ermine capes & trains carried by two pages.
The Queen had a wonderful dress of cream satin embroidered
in pearls & the most wonderful collar and breastplate of
diamonds. Diamond crown & earrings. In fact - when she
walked she sparkled like a cut crystal chandelier.
The King wore his Crown, with the great ruby & Koh-i-noor
diamond. It was rather becoming only it looked a
little too large, as if it should have been taken in a little

A whole lot of dignitaries including Mr. Baldwin followed. We waited until they came out + then went into the House of Lords where we rubbed shoulders with a lot of duchesses etc. waiting to go home.

Next day we were even more fortunate for the Armistice celebration. Col. Vannier got us tickets - for Mr. Thomas' office immediately opposite the Cenotaph + two windows from where the Queen was. We could see everything marvellously + it was one of the most thrilling experiences I believe we shall ever have. You have no conception of what Eng. + the Empire mean till you see the British people on a day like this. We went at a lunch after 9 + the streets were black with people then - standing 15 deep on the sidewalks. The Cenotaph is in the middle of Whitehall + from early morning the street is closed for traffic from Westminster to Trafalgar Square. So that the whole thing is carried out without any confusion. It was a wonderful morning, warm + ~~clear~~ sunny + London is beautiful when the sun shines.

About 10 we went out on to the balconies + Lady Williams
Dagler of Montreal happened to stand next to us + as she
had seen it many times before she was able to tell us just
what was going on. You can see from the picture just how
it looked. At 10.50 the Prince came out of the
Home Office + took his place. + the Cabinet. Ministers etc
the bishop. Choir + about 10 bands were already in place.
At 10.55 he stepped forward, bowed + laid his wreath
at the foot of the Cenotaph. Then Mr. Macdonald, Mr.
Baldwin, ~~Mr. Macdonald, Mr. Ferguson~~ + the representatives of
the other Dominions laid theirs. + the Bishops of London
said a prayer. At 11 the bells rang out all over the
city. The flags dipped + then there was absolute silence
for 2 min. The motor buses stopped + the people got out,
took off their hats + waited. You can't imagine how
huddling it was. Then the bishops prayed again + the
Grenadier guards Band played almost in a whisper
the first bars of God Save the King. You realize
that that was what the whole thing meant.

It was tremendous. The tears simply ran down
my face.

Thus, we went to Col. Vanmeter's to lunch
& had a lovely time. Going out for
three other engagements - this week so
we shall soon know people.

Hope to write Glenis now.

No word from you yet but Blanche
has just phoned to say there are
letters here which I hope may
be from you.

Best love to you all

Luella

MB Williams to her family, 16 Nov 1931

Transcription / Additional Information

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Best love to you all

M.B.