

New Horizons

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In sheer amount of travel, Margaret Singer must have made some kind of record, although she usually went abroad for the sole purpose of extending her crusade. The exceptions were her trips for information: her first to France, her wartime crossing of the English Channel to see the Dutch clinics, and her later search for contraceptives in Germany. In 1934 she had the same reason for going to Russia. At Zurich, Dr. Ruben-Wolf had given a panegyric on the Soviet Union's birth control program which Margaret wanted to inspect, especially the spermatoxin tested by a Dr. Tushnov of the Institute of Experimental Medicine.

There was much besides that she was eager to see in the vast new social laboratory, but Noah, who was seventy-four and who always fussed about accommodations, had no stomach for roughing it in a Communist country. He would go to England and after her trip, they would vacation in *gemuthlich* Marienbad. Since Grant, who had finished his second year at Cornell Medical School, wanted to examine Soviet hospitals, he would accompany his mother, together with Florence Rose, her efficient new aide.

During this trip Margaret's reactions fluctuated from a chronic frustration, often close to anger, to highest admiration. She was deeply impressed to find that every child in the Soviet Union was a wanted child. Callous as the system was to both the old regime and even to old people, children always held priority. During a milk shortage, they received what there was. Legally, they were protected from exploitation and corporal punishment. In contrast to the past,

most of them had superior care and schooling, and if the pupil was considered promising, he would be paid while going to college

Because the state assumed guardianship of its youth, it relieved parents of many financial responsibilities and in some ways had upgraded its human resources. For the first time Russia's young people were literate. The best side of the system, as Margaret saw it, was the Institute for the Protection of Motherhood and Childhood, a great establishment with model clinics, nurseries, milk centers, and educational laboratories. In her *Autobiography* Margaret says that it represented an impressive effort to teach "the rudiments of hygiene to an enormous population that had previously known nothing about it." Public nurseries near every factory helped free mothers from constant child care and cooking.

At the start of her trip, in Leningrad, Margaret managed to see Dr. Tushnov, who had become the Soviets' forgotten man. He volunteered that some years back he had indeed given long-term immunization by spermatoxin against pregnancy to twenty-two out of thirty women tested. However, in the midst of his tests, the state had changed its policy and shifted his assistants to more utilitarian tasks. Furthermore, under penalty of arrest, he was forbidden to publish anything on the subject. This bitter news persuaded Margaret to promote American tests.

In Moscow she found Dr. Ruben-Wolf, who had escaped from Germany with her family when the Nazis took over. The German doctor was now in charge of one of the large abortoriums that she had described at Zurich. Although the operation was discouraged, for health reasons a skilled surgeon would perform it for the equivalent of \$250, and it could be done in two to six minutes. Afterward, the patient was allowed an adequate convalescence with no deduction in her pay.

With Dr. Ruben-Wolf as interpreter, Margaret talked to many of the patients, who were well cared for and grateful for the operation. However, in her journal, she noted that the doctors did not use anesthesia, and she suspected that there must be needless infections because they did not wear gloves. When she asked some of the women who had returned for repeated operations, why they did not use birth control, they all said that they did not know how

Physicians everywhere claimed that birth control was available and when the superintendent of one hospital claimed that there was a department right in his building, she insisted on seeing it. She was shown some posters and a dusty exhibit of condoms and diaphragms, but the door to the consultation room was locked. On inquiry, a young assistant explained that it had been closed for two years, while they awaited supplies.

At a reception given by Dr. Kaminsky, the Commissariat of Health, Margaret learned the current policy. It had been a pleasant social occasion at which the host had explained that the old regime's worst legacy was medical backwardness. With a new concern for their patients' welfare instead of profits, Russian doctors now stressed preventive medicine. Since preventive medicine sounded like *her cue*, in the question period Margaret asked about birth control. Aghast, the interpreter exploded with a tirade against Malthusianism. When he subsided, she explained her point.

Because the Soviet Union had long-range plans for farm and factory output, she thought they might have one for people. Under communism, there had been a population growth of 50 million. She had seen an abortorium and had been told that there were 400,000 such operations a year. Obviously women did not want so many pregnancies, but abortion was a cruel way to achieve family limitation. Was there no preventive plan?

When Dr. Kaminsky understood her question, he answered coldly that there had been a labor shortage for six years and so the government did not wish to restrict the population. Evidently her question seemed to him in as poor taste as it would have to the Catholic hierarchy. The People's Government was not concerned with the people's needs, instead, it insisted that they follow dictates from above. This fact would be repeatedly demonstrated. Two years after her visit, the state outlawed abortion under criminal penalties. Twenty years later, with a change of leadership, abortion was again legalized.

One day a voice from the past startled Margaret in her Moscow hotel. She did not recognize the ill-dressed, beaten-looking fellow until he identified himself as the young labor leader who had helped set up her Seattle meetings eighteen years earlier. Then she asked

him to lunch, where she heard the story of this man who remained nameless in both of her accounts

During the months when Bill Haywood was in Leavenworth and the Wobblies were being arrested, he had hired out as a ship's stoker, making his way to Russia, where he hoped to usher in the glorious new society His dream was so far from being fulfilled that he rated her lunch the best meal he had eaten since leaving home In her private journal she quoted his observations on the "workers' republic" Shock troops were used to speed up production, and factory machines were cleaned before and after use, on a man's own time Why not return to the United States, she asked? He assured her that he would grab the chance, but could not get in

Bill Haywood had succumbed to diabetes in Russia, but some said that he also had been disillusioned He had renounced conventional loyalties to help the workers of the world, but in the end he too was a displaced person, lonely and ignored There were rumors also of John Reed's disaffection, although he had been buried as a hero in the Kremlin His erratic widow, Louise Bryant, was one of those who claimed that he had been spiritually as well as physically sick

Lunch at the American embassy turned Margaret's thoughts back to those friends of her *Woman Rebel* days Before her untimely death, Louise Bryant had married William C Bullitt, currently the first United States ambassador to the Soviet Union Now presiding at his table was their ten-year-old daughter In her *Autobiography*, Margaret noted that the Russians liked Bullitt for his early defense of them, but of course did not place him in the category of John Reed

The tour closed at Odessa, where the travelers boarded an Italian liner that looked elegant because it was clean Russia had created a vast enthusiasm for fresh linen and for plumbing that worked On the leisurely passage to Marseilles, Margaret's histrionic gifts flared up in a skit that she wrote and directed for the usual gala evening To judge by a surviving verse, Margaret Sanger was no longer the woman rebel

It's a long way to Communism, it's a hard row to hoe,
It's a big jump from Capitalism and the sweetest things we know

You can have your Marx and Engels and work your five year plan,
But we'll take our bourgeois culture and good old Uncle Sam

At Marienbad there was a cable from Grant, who had left earlier to return to medical school In New York, he had found his brother sick again During the last years Stuart had undergone nine operations for mastoiditis and for his sinuses, badly hurt when a squash racket smashed the bone over one eye The doctors were now considering a tenth operation To thwart that possibility, Margaret gave up her plans with Noah and started home In New York, she accepted the alternative of a warm dry climate, so together she and Stuart set out for Tucson, Arizona Riding with him in his little Ford coupe, Margaret at long last gave her elder son her full attention Beside his health, he had several problems

As a boy, Stuart had found his satisfactions in sports, in which he excelled, but he was slower than Grant in finding his profession He had stuck out the early part of the depression as a broker on Wall Street, but had learned that he too wanted to be a doctor He had been taking courses in chemistry and biology so that he could enter medical school in the fall Now once more he had to revise his plans

Tucson's climate was so obviously right for Stuart that eventually he settled there as a physician His mother also came to love the place and having been drawn closer to this son than she had ever been before, she persuaded Noah that they too must have a western home, although for some years it was mostly a stopping-off place between trips

Early in 1935 Margaret received the kind of invitation that she could never refuse The All India Women's Conference had endorsed birth control and wanted her at their next meeting to perfect their plans An old friend, Edith How-Martyn, proposed to make the long journey worthwhile by booking her for a three-month tour Mrs How Martyn, now director of the International Information Center, an outgrowth of the Geneva conference, would do the advance work Here was a chance to reach the second largest population in the world, a population second to none in poverty and growth rate

The tour opened that November with two memorable days with Gandhi. His note, in answer to her own, greeted her on landing "Do, by all means, come whenever you can. And you shall stay with me, if you would not mind what must appear to be our extreme simplicity, we have no masters and no servants here."

Although he lived in egalitarian simplicity, Margaret found it hard in caste-ridden India to travel without a retinue. Friends told her that she must have someone to care for her bedding, which had to be taken everywhere with her, make train reservations, and buy food en route. So for the first time she traveled with not only a secretary, but a servant, who needed an extra coolie for his luggage.

A two-wheel cart met her at Warha, the village nearest to Gandhi's settlement. It was Monday, his day of silence, so she was merely presented in the large room where he sat in meditation, cross-legged on the floor. Rising at once, he beamed in wordless greeting. His appearance, says her *Autobiography*, was perhaps even more exaggerated than his pictures. "His ears stuck out more prominently, his shaved head was more shaved, his toothless mouth grinned more broadly, leaving a great void between his lips. But around him, and a part of him was a luminous aura. And once you had seen this, the ugliness faded and you glimpsed the something in the essence of his being which people have followed and which had made them call him the Mahatma."

She accepted him as a saint, never wanting anyone's support more than his, and yet even that first day was disappointed. Everything was so crudely inefficient from the primitive irrigation system and cotton-growing to the paper-making and oil press. "It seemed so pitiable an effort, like going backward instead of forward and trying to keep millions laboring on petty hand processes merely to give them work to do by which they might exist."

Mrs. Gandhi, who had been a child bride, marrying a child husband, both twelve years old, still supervised the meals, where everyone sat on the floor, helping himself with his fingers to the large array of fruits and vegetables served on shining trays. Hot milk, soups, and porridge rounded out the menus.

Writing on a slate, Gandhi invited Margaret to join him next day.

on his early morning walk. A few others came also, while along the way, men, women, and children waited near their homes to see him pass. Some prostrated themselves as before a holy man. Skirting the refuse of the narrow alleys, the walkers came at last to the open fields, studded with occasional huts, enlivened with babies, goats, and dogs. Some people were out bathing themselves or preparing for the day.

In their two long talks Gandhi and Margaret agreed completely on the need for family limitation, but they could not agree on how. Total abstinence was for him the only moral way. He argued that wives should resist their husbands and if need be, separate from them to avoid sexual relations. To Margaret this was not only unrealistic, but disastrous. He was courteously silent when she spoke, but when he resumed his argument, he seemed not to have heard her. There was no dialogue.

To Gandhi, sexual union was merely lust. He deplored the fact that in his youth he had desired his wife, and he now included celibacy as a cardinal virtue, along with truth, nonviolence, fearlessness, and self control. Margaret felt that he had no rational view of married love, but had reverted to the Eastern asceticism so like the priestly view of Christianity.

Perhaps by way of consolation Gandhi finally assured her that her efforts had not been wasted. He was infinitely kind, but she knew that he would never help her. Saintly though he was and possessed of such spiritual force that he could win a bloodless war of independence for his people, he seemed to Margaret to have odd gaps in his judgment. To expect illiterate girls, married as children, many living in purdah, to exert such moral suasion on their husbands as to limit sexual relations to three or four times in a life, was incredible. It was more naive than hoping to turn back the Industrial Revolution with hand spinning.

More congenial were the views of the poet Rabindranath Tagore. Although the first to hail Gandhi as "Mahatma!" years previously he had written Margaret the best answer to the Gandhian view.

Santiniketan,

September 30, 1925

DEAR MARGARET SANGER,

I am of the opinion that the Birth Control Movement is a great movement not only because it will save women from enforced and undesirable maternity, but because it will help the cause of peace by lessening the number of surplus population of a country, scrambling for food and space outside its own rightful limits. In a hunger-stricken country like India it is a cruel crime thoughtlessly to bring more children to existence than could be taken care of, causing endless suffering to them and imposing a degrading upon the whole family. It is evident that the utter helplessness of a growing poverty very rarely acts as a check controlling the burden of over-population. It proves that in this case nature's urging gets the better of the severe warning that comes from the providence of civilized social life. Therefore, I believe, that to wait till the moral sense of man becomes a great deal more powerful than it is now and till then to allow countless generations of children to suffer privations and untimely death for no fault of their own is a great social injustice which should not be tolerated. I feel grateful for the cause you have made your own and for which you have suffered.

Sincerely yours,

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Almost at the other end of the continent from Wahra, beyond Calcutta, Tagore lived in the House of Peace on an estate used in part for agricultural experiments. With his wide-ranging, humanistic concerns, his long white hair and beard, his handsome head with meditative eyes, he seemed an Eastern version of Havelock Ellis. In spite of wealth, he lived in monastic simplicity, his room filled with books and papers. Like the ancients, he taught his students in a mango grove or under banyan trees.

Among India's intellectuals, another leader who gave Margaret both practical aid and hope was Mme Pandit, the future ambassador to the United Nations and later the president of the United Nations General Assembly. Sister of Jawaharlal Nehru, who was then in England and was already considered Gandhi's heir, her active sympathy suggested future cooperation.

As Margaret made her trek around India, she came to know the country as have few visitors. Occasionally she was entertained in the palace of a maharaja, but she also spent hours in the worst slums of Bombay. With an interpreter, she talked to the lean women with their children, weak-limbed and sunken eyed. Her *Autobiography* stresses the omnipresent contrasts. "The loveliest architecture in the world was set against nauseating squalor. Wealth beyond calculation existed alongside poverty that was living death, dazzling mental attainments beside an ignorance utterly abysmal." After the Women's Conference, she might have added that the will of the majority was commonly ignored at the whim of the mighty.

Toward the end of December Margaret reached the tip of the continent, the state of Travancore. There a remarkable Parsi, Mrs. Rustomji Feridoonji, was the guiding spirit of the Women's Conference and hoped to add birth control to the public health program. Already some municipalities supported a form of socialized medicine, sending out midwives and doctors to the poorest areas. Mrs. Feridoonji insisted that wherever vaccination went, birth control should go too. Margaret helped to draw up plans and prepared to speak for them.

But if Mrs. Feridoonji was the mind and spirit of the conference, its titular head was the maharani of Travancore. Entertaining at a lavish garden party the day before the opening, she asked Margaret to return the next morning for a further word in private. Since the birth control resolution was to come up at nine, Margaret agreed with some misgivings and appeared at the palace well in advance of that time.

While Margaret nervously saw her watch tick off the precious minutes, the maharani inquired solicitously about every member of her guest's family. Finally her hostess came to the point, which she admitted was a delicate one. She would like the American guest to abstain from the debate and to shift her own talk to some other subject—brothels, for instance. True, there were none in Travancore, but it was a subject on which all women agreed.

With as much patience as she could manage, Margaret reminded the great lady that she had come all the way from New York to support birth control. The maharani sighed. A group of Catholics, in-

cluding her own social secretary, had threatened to walk out if the resolution passed. Once again, in far off India, Margaret was confronting a Catholic cabal! Surely, she insisted, the needs of millions of people outweighed the feelings of a few foreigners. Reluctantly, the maharani yielded, but to placate the opposition, she allowed them two speeches for every one in favor of the resolution.

The maharani's ruling produced a tedious day, like a rerun of all the arguments that Margaret had heard for twenty years. At the end, three-fourths of the delegates voted for birth control. No Indian opposed it, only Eurasians. No married woman opposed it, only spinsters. Because of their stand that day, the All-India Women's Association emerged as a meaningful force.

On this first trip to India, Margaret's chief impact was on the medical profession. She addressed the All India Obstetrical and Gynecological Congress at its initial meeting, she spoke to the All-India Nursing and Medical Association at Hyderabad and to many district and local associations. Usually she showed two films, *The Biology of Human Reproduction* and a training lesson for doctors on contraception. Everywhere she left gynecoplacques, models of the female reproductive organs, which were unknown in India. Although the phallus had played a part in traditional Hindu worship, the female organs were shrouded in mystery. Among Moslems, where purdah existed, this was natural, since a doctor might not see, much less examine, a woman patient. Instead, he used a medicine doll on which the midwife marked the area of pain. From this he made his diagnosis. At best, few Indians ever saw a doctor, but the enforcement of such standards of female modesty raised the toll of maternal and infant deaths to what Indians called Himalayan heights.

Because most of the population lived on one poor meal a day, they could not dream of buying any contraceptives. Margaret had brought along a new kind, harmless, usually effective, easily available, and a year's supply cost only twenty cents. It was a foam powder made from rice and supplemented by a rubber sponge.

Most doctors doubted that Indian women would use any contraceptive, but wherever Margaret had the chance to question them, they showed the universal and desperate desire to be free from constant pregnancy. But there was a stumbling block. Although par-

ents were hungry because of their large families, their children were their only social security. Men wanted at least two sons, preferably a dozen, to care for them in old age.

Margaret's talks persuaded forty-five local medical societies to launch their first birth control programs, while fifty hospitals and clinics set up information centers. This was a drop in the Indian sea of need, but it was a start.

In her ten-thousand-mile tour of India, Margaret gave sixty-four lectures along with uncounted informal talks and interviews. She endured intense heat, perpetual motion, and fatigue. As if indestructible, she let Mrs. How Martyn book her for the return trip and met her schedule in Rangoon and Malaya. However, in Hong Kong, she was seized with acute pains. Good trouper that she was, she dosed herself with codeine so that she might finish her lectures before seeing a doctor. He diagnosed a gall bladder attack and rushed her to a hospital where she was trapped for two weeks. Ignominiously, she had to cancel her China schedule, which she always regretted. This halted her last chance to return to the world's largest nation.

Delaying the gall bladder operation until she reached home, she managed to fulfill her Hawaiian lectures. They went so well that she complacently kept on postponing the operation in order to meet her lecture requests. The most challenging of these looked like a reprieve for her China failure. The Chinese Medical Association, prompted by Mme. Chiang Kai-shek, asked her to return as their guest. The press welcomed the news of Margaret Sanger's sailing to the Orient armed with contraceptives to halt China's teeming millions. But from the start the trip was disastrous. During a rough sea, she slipped on deck, breaking her arm. The ship's doctor set it so badly that it had to be rebroken and reset in Tokyo. Nevertheless, nothing but a war would stop her this time, but war did. While under surgery, Japan bombed China and the invasion of the mainland commenced. Margaret, accepting her fate, returned home.

The totalitarian states were demanding lebensraum for their respective and unrestricted numbers of yellow-skinned, black-haired, and blond babies. Japan had first shown that the League of Nations was only a "paper league" when it seized Manchuria. Mussolini had confirmed it when he bombed the Abyssinians. Hitler then

seized and fortified the Rhineland and was even now taking Austria. Soon he would welcome Chamberlain to Munich and take the Sudetenland.

For a second time Margaret saw the world plunging toward Armageddon. It was not just the slaughter that she dreaded, but that war turned the clock back on all progress. During the Tokyo stopover, Shidzue Ishimoto had described her country's internal events. To defeat their opponents, the militarists had resorted to murder. They had revived the "Dangerous Thought" law, which was creating widespread terror and repression. Dr. Majima was in prison, and all of the birth control clinics were closed. Shidzue herself was under surveillance, although her husband had joined the empire-builders and was in Manchuria exploiting the mineral resources.

Elsewhere the tide ran the same, with repression destroying Margaret's work. The Nazis, who had long since closed the clinics, were now exhorting every soldier to leave the Fatherland children, or at least prospective ones. Himmler encouraged German women to begot the offspring of soldiers, "even outside wedlock." As war spread, so did these attitudes. When France fell, Marshal Pétain declared that in the future girls would be trained only for the traditional role of raising brave men. Blaming defeat on the Conscious Generation (the old Syndicalist Slogan), he said that it had "eaten away French virility and was threatening race suicide." Race suicide became the world's new bogey.

In spite of the One-Package Victory of 1937, not all legal points had been settled. Two years later, a district court upheld the closing of the mothers' clinic in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. Another court supported the Connecticut ban on the use of contraceptives. Margaret's New England friends begged her to come and defend her cause. When she did so, she found an emotional climate like that of twenty years before. In the largest Boston parish, Father Connor read Pétain's words, adding that birth control was "unpatriotic and disgraceful." This was repeated at every mass. "God will not be mocked," warned the priest. "Nations preaching birth control will disappear from the stage of life, as have ancient Rome and France."

His words echoed across the nation, some priests elaborating the point "Better a baptized idiot than a child unborn," declaimed Father Joseph Vaughn on radio KFAC, Los Angeles

The Worcester and Springfield, Massachusetts, papers printed anonymous letters, signed "Patriot," attacking the "chief proponent of the subversive doctrine undermining American virility" Catholic pressure against Margaret Sanger was so great that "in the interest of harmony," the New Haven Board of Education canceled her meeting in the high school and Holyoke's Congregational Church did the same In this case, there was a heartwarming twist to the episode, when Catholic labor leaders offered their hall "in the interest of free speech and fair play" With only two hours to notify the public, handbills attracted an overflow crowd

Personal losses darkened these years At the age of eighty and with a fatal growth in his throat, Havelock Ellis died in the summer of 1939 In her sparsely written journal, Margaret noted "It seemed for days that something deeply vital had ceased to function The security of his friendship was one of the delights of my life But to see him last year to realize his frailty It was no kindness to wish it otherwise A great man, a beautiful spirit, a world's work done What more can one ask of life? FINIS"

More poignant was the loss of Dr Hannah Stone because she was only forty-seven and still doing the world's work "God should be petitioned and questioned on why this should be done to us," was Margaret's stern reaction Little publicized, Dr Stone was one of whom friends spoke only in superlatives Because the clinic could not afford her, she had worked there without pay, building an outstanding institution At her death, she left a file of 100,000 case histories, which impressed the medical profession far more than any argument Furthermore, her file offered invaluable aid for future innovators in contraception She herself had become the nation's chief authority in her field, and with her husband, a noted urologist, she had written *A Marriage Manual* Eventually, Dr Abraham Stone took her place as director of the enlarged clinic

Early in 1941 came a letter from Shidzue Ishimoto, prescient not only for its grasp of her nation's policy, but of her own remarkable future She feared that this would be her last communication until

peace came to the Pacific No individual could stop the tide that was sweeping their shore

"I feel now," she wrote, "that I am actually reviewing the panorama of revolution here in this country We are losing all of the charms of life in discarding the old order, yet we do not know what is coming We have read in history the story of revolution with thrills, but it is trying, disagreeable to stand through

"After long mental sufferings, disappointments and rethinking I have come to the conclusion that we must have an infinite faith in the future So I try to keep my courage in an attempt to build a new future program for our women through studying the history of women of the world "

On December 7, 1941, Margaret Sanger, still the unswerving pacifist that she had been in 1917, wrote bitterly in her journal "So it has come to pass, as many pro-British Americans have wished and prayed it would Now all promises not to send our boys to fight on foreign soil are off " In another vein, she added, "Stuart and Barb have named the baby Margaret Blue eyes, delicate features and going to be lovely I know " Thus she greeted her new joy, Margaret Sanger II

At this time the Sleses were living in the Catalina foothills near Tucson Before the depression, Noah had sold his Three-in-One Company and had gone through the bad years with better luck than most people Although his fortune dwindled, there was nothing material that he lacked On the other hand, there was nothing now to which he looked forward Eighty-two years old and often ailing, his interests had shrunk while Margaret's had taken on a global scale In Tucson there was no outlet for his practical skills, which had once made him his wife's partner and added purpose to his life

Not long after Pearl Harbor, Noah had two falls in one evening Since the doctor found no damage, they blamed his unsteadiness on a refill of an Old Fashioned cocktail But Margaret thought her husband greatly changed She took no trip away from him that year and tried to adapt to his desires Because it annoyed him when she concentrated on writing, she took up painting, like Grandma Moses, and she too was a grandmother Hers also were bright, decorative pieces, although in Mexican instead of New England tradition This

new vocation was more sociable than writing, and she never minded Noah's interruptions. Cut off from her work by the war, as well as by Noah's illness, she found pleasure in her hobby and to perfect herself, took a correspondence course in painting.

In her starkly frank journal, she had written harshly of Noah's petty tyrannies. Perhaps now she saw that marriage had not been easy for him either. With few activities of his own, it had been hard to have a wife so famous and self-sufficient. As his own confidence diminished, he had tried to keep her home with querulous complaints, but at the call of her work, she had always left him. Later she had returned to his loneliness, full of her own pressing responsibilities. Once she asked him if his years of marriage with her had been happy. He could not say that they had all been happy, but he pleased her by adding that they were never dull.

The Slegs went back to Willow Lake in the spring of 1943, but in the early summer Noah had another fall. Half paralyzed, he later wanted to return to the sunshine of the West. This time they lived in a house near the center of Tucson, within easy call of doctors. Noah's chief pleasure was an electric buzzer on his chair, by which he could summon Margaret wherever she was. At last he had a full-time wife, but the jovial country squire had long since departed. "He wants to die," Margaret wrote to her friend Dorothy Gordon, "but his heart is too strong and regular. So he lingers helpless and depressed. It is so sad that I weep and weep my eyes out." "I am totally decrepit," he dictated in a note to his niece, Carol. "Really I do not understand why I am kept here. There is no joy in being aged."

A week later, on the first day of summer 1943, he was dead. In her journal his wife wrote, "I was close to him this whole year. The household revolved around his every wish, his food, his comforts. He never failed to tell the world how wonderful, how intelligent I am, but never told me. It might spoil me. . . . go to my head (True too)," she added ruefully. "So as one looks back on those years from 1921 to 1943, all the petty irritations and annoyances are wiped out. Death removes them all. It was not the memories of the unreal, only the goodness, kindness and loving things remain in my thoughts of J. Noah. I'm glad of that."