

Wed. 9 Oct.

Now I'll finish this while I wait for my room to get warm enough to dress. I've just started a fire- French faggots with a candle end underneath to start it, and now I'm all bundled up in blankets in bed.

We had a gorgeous time last night. At least I did, for I staged my second absolutely responsible show and it was a real success. The last one I tried fizzled out at the last moment because that very afternoon most of the performers had to leave. Luckily an unexpected professional trio appeared at the last moment and saved the day so I think I was the only one disappointed. However I believe now I know how to put a show through without any regular performers, and have it fine. The answer is: stunts.

I had announced this show on Sunday and asked for volunteers but the men are shy and I got very little response. So on Monday I went to M.H.Q. and found our Divisional Entertainment Secretary I put it up to him and "How can you give a show if no one wants to perform and you haven't anyone to lead singing?" Some question! He was equal to it though and gave me a long list of stunts - cock fighting (not real cocks, men) Indian wrestling, etc. etc. So last night I was all ready for them. The tent filled a little beyond capacity, as usual, and I must admit I was nervous. At 8 I closed the canteen and got some men to rip up a section of the floor for a stage. We laid it across some tables and it made a good one though rather high. That was O.K. but the men sat around and apparently wondered where the performance was coming in. Then I got up on the stage and told them it was just a homemade party - more intimate than a real show- and I expected them all to take part. I called first for six volunteers for a relay cracker-eating race. After a lot of laughing and some jeering at each other I got six of them on the platform. I gave them two hard dry crackers apiece. The leader on each side started and the second man had to wait until the first could whistle before he could begin. I offered a prize of cigarettes to the winning team. It really was screamingly funny - the tent fairly rocked with the laughter and shouts and then- as hope of hearing the whistle grew- it became almost breathless.