

5 August - Yesterday (Sunday) there was a grand service in the Catholic Church to pray for the Allies. My little old Mme. Brunet insisted upon giving me her seat for the occasion. At first I protested; but she said that I represented America for her, and it was all she could do to show honour to my country. After that, of course, there was nothing for me to do but tell her that I appreciated her act, and I thanked her in the name of America. She's a dear - but imagine me representing America! Pretty hard on Abraham.

The service was a regular High Mass, with the addition of music by the American band. A lot of our officers occupied a block of seats in the very front of the church, and the poor men never knew when to stand or when to kneel. I was even further in front, for I was in the first row of cross seats facing the chancel. I could touch the gorgeous golden cape of the priest when he sat down on our side; but luckily I was surrounded by French people, and a lady beside me told me what to do. The church was jam crammed, and it was a mighty interesting crowd - French civilians, American soldiers - all mixed together. Lots of children - even babies - but all well behaved, except that they couldn't restrain their interest when an old French peasant fell asleep and toppled over and was pulled up again by one of our Captains.

Tuesday, the 6th - Well, the conference is over, and all went well - too well. They want to move me. Mr. Ames, the Divisional Secretary, wants me to move down to St. Aignan to work in the canteen there. My heart is in my boots tonight, for I don't want to go one bit. I've just got things going here - the tent is the prettiest in the Division (they all said so today), the kitchen is in splendid order; so are the supplies. The electric lights go on tonight for the first time. My shelves, cupboards and counters are all fixed up with linoleum and arranged in order. I've just made arrangements with a petesserie here in town to let me use the ovens and pans twice a week - so I could really turn out some pretty successful cakes - and I've just successfully solved the problem of turning out enough lemonade at short notice. In fact, this evening for the first minute since I've arrived there are no pressing problems, and there is a fair stretch of deable work ahead - and now they want to move me!

As I understand it, the canteen at St. Aignan isn't working well. There are several women there who are a little difficult to get on with and the head is not as efficient as is necessary. They want to make a change; and just because my little canteen here is working well they picked on me to work in there. They say if I can make good it will result in my running that canteen, and I suppose that's in the nature of a promotion, because they have five soldiers there for every one here; but it is too big to be personal. I shall become just a cook and general tidier instead of a friend-in-general as I feel now. It will be all indoor work instead of my open-air kitchen. The soldiers won't be able to drift in and beat eggs while they tell me their love affairs. In fact, there will be very little contact with the men at all. Here, my akes are really just an attraction - a kind of excitement - a home-touch - not an end in themselves. There, the men want actual food; and there is so much business that you just tend to cooking and selling all day long - no time for chats or love affairs. Marie cried when I told her I might have to change, and has asked me to look for a house she could rent there. She says she'll move to be with me. My dear old Mme. Brunet looked pretty teary, too, and exclaimed it was not a good thing to set your affections upon any strangers, it caused too much pain.

Oh well, I may not have to go. It is arranged now that I am to go to St. Aignan tomorrow morning, ostensibly on a couple of days' leave of absence to visit Eleanor Doty. In reality I am to look over the work, size up the situation, and report to Mr. Ames as to whether I think I can handle the job or not. I'm hoping "not"; but of course, if I think I can, I shall have to do it. I suppose it's really my pride that's suffering a little. Here, I'm a not very big toad in a middle sized puddle - but I'm all the toad there is. There, I'll be a little toad in a pretty good sized puddle. It's more fun running even a small canteen entirely "on your own" than being one of a lot in a big one; and it's much more satisfactory to come in personal contact with the soldiers than just to stay in the kitchen and cook for them. Oh well, c'est la guerre! And I've a sneaking hood in the back of my mind: Mr.