

29 August

Usually I get back to my room during the afternoon even. if its only for long enough to wash up and get tidy. I always come for my electric light anyway, for I need it to get home later.

Then supper- same as dinner, with the addition of sour bread soup- only thank heaven it isn't any longer.

I get back to the tent sometime between 6-30 and 7 and open for the evening. "Opening" consists of unlocking and letting down a huge wooden partition which forms a door for the back of the whole counter when its raised and a raised floor when its lowered. Then I put on a big blue apron if I can find a clean one or offer a silent prayer that the chocolate wont splash if I can't, and I put some of everything on the display shelves behind the counter; see to it that my big earthenware crock is full of lemonade, that there is more ready outside, that there is plenty of chocolate, and that Marie is on the job of supplies and dish-washing. Then business begins.

The evenings are the best of everything, the real raison d'etre, the most picturesque and satisfactory part of it all, the climax of the work of the whole day. I'm not going to try to describe our evenings in this letter, they'll have to wait till I've a little more time. Just imagine me pretty busy from 7 to 9-45 and I'll go on from there.

At 9-45, or even as late as 10, I'm about ready for home. I wheel my bicycle down the silent street, for Marie has none and I see her home. We chatter bad French all the way- about 5 minutes walk only, and when we reach her house I usually sit a moment on my bicycle and bask over the day's events with Marie and perhaps a neighbor or two. Its lots of fun to realize that in all the little group there aren't a dozen English words. My French is undoubtedly exorciating but I can make it go pretty fast and they're clever at understanding so we have some great old gossips.

I flash on my electric light for the ride home after that, for though its only another five minutes- less- its through the town and out the other side; past little groups of soldiers sitting in doorways trying to talk with their French landlords, shattered shops, the light of the military police headquarters, the other Y with a few soldiers lingering outside the door, a very dark block of little French stone houses, then out into the country for a stone's throw- real country, with stars thick overhead- then the ghostly white iron gates of my ballet and the "Good night" of the old gardener who usually sits up waiting for me.

On moonlighted nights I know of few things lovelier than the walk from the lodge to the house. The place was designed for moonlight. The trees are placed exactly right and the open lawn with its little pool in the center shines like a fairy story! Its fairies in the open but a romance in the shadow, even the Villa d'Este isn't lovelier in the moonlight, though by day there's no comparison.

I let myself into the house by a little side door. A door in a turret you reach by some winding stone steps. The other night I was locked out and roused the house by ringing the old door bell- a swinging iron bell on a rack overhead with a long chain to pull. Usually though I get in easily and lock up in the most modern manner. Then is when I need my light the most for I have to go down a long hall, lock another door at the end, turn sharply to the right to find the curved stairway- another hall- another door- another curved stairway- another hall- then my door and home. When I forget the light I have to grope my way in complete darkness and although I know the way perfectly its spooky! Often there will be a crack of light under Falecie's door across the hall from mine and she will come, candle in hand, and have a dish of gossip before we get to bed. Falecie is a French Ellen Craven, only younger. And my word! how clean she does keep the house! When you consider that its a big house and Falecie is the only servant besides the old gardener you wonder how such a marvel of cleanliness is a human possibility.