

St. Romain
27th September.

Dearest Father:

I'm not sure I don't like this place better than Contrea. Its such fun doing all the Y job instead of just running the canteen and. Not that I do such a lot, but I begin to feel possibilities. I got up a show last week which was pretty good. Of course it was the performers who made it good, but I felt just as relieved and happy as though I'd done the whole thing myself. Four of the men here sing really well and they have a lot of good songs, and we have one man who does dialect monologues splendidly. His only trouble is that he thinks he can sing- and he can't! But his monologues are fine. Those things plus a piano solo were all we had, but the show lasted a little over an hour and ended by everyone singing, led by the quartette.

We had it outside for it wasn't a cold night, and I wish you could have seen it. There's a big flat stone set in the wall between us and the church and we used that for a stage. Its just big enough for four men. We put candle lanterns around the edge and six or seven of the men sitting nearest held more candles so we had enough light at the center, but it grew pitch black behind long before we were through. The men sat on the ground and on a few benches and stood. Some strung along the stone wall behind and I'm not sure some didn't climb the few trees in front, anyway we were well packed; and it certainly was an enthusiastic audience. I do adore hearing the boys whistle and call when they like anything. There's a fine spirit among the men: there's a movie on tonight (I'm writing while its on) and just as it got started the machine broke down and it took the men nearly half an hour to fix it. You'd think the boys would get impatient at the long wait in the dark, not a bit of it; they whistled and smoked (you could cut the air with a knife) and sang and the quartette volunteered a few songs and I made an announcement and when finally the picture started again one man cheered for the operator because he'd succeeded in fixing it up.

My announcement was of another show for next Wednesday night. I asked the boys if they'd like an Amateur Stunt night and they all shouted they would. So then I said all right, we'd have it. That was all. I do wonder how it will turn out. I've got two or three men I know are good to promise to volunteer so we wont fall flat anyway; and the leader of the quartette has promised to stage manage it for me. It will be either a great success or an utter fizzle. I tremble but hope.

Our usual evening schedule here now is just ordinary dry canteen until about 7, then the hot chocolate line forms and runs half or three quarters of an hour. Then some sort of stunts or show runs until 8:30 or 8:45 then chocolate again until 9:15. Taps is at 8:30 now, so at 8:15 everyone hustles home.

One of the men called out to me tonight as I was passing him on the road "Say, before you came we didn't have nothin' to do evenin's but walk up and down the road" Of course its just luck that we've had a good many entertainments sent out to us lately- I've been personally responsible for only one so far- so I couldn't take the credit he wanted to give me, but it was pleasant to know he was pleased anyway.

We had a very good show the other night. A man came and taught the boys some new songs. He stood on a box and got them all singing splendidly. The only song they seem to remember now is "Pull your shades down, Mary Ann" which isn't as vulgar as it sounds, and is funny. Another that went with a swing was

"Good morning, Mr. Zip, Zip, Zip,
With your hair cut just as short as mine.
Good morning, Mr. Zip, Zip, Zip
You're looking mighty fine.
Ashes to ashes and dust to dust,
If the Camels don't get you, the Fatimas must
Good morning, Mr. Zip, Zip, Zip
With your hair cut just as short as-
With your hair cut just as short as-
With your hair cut just as short as mine