

St. Romain, 5th October

Dearest Father:

These days are pretty hectic, but my word! they're interesting. You see all the men who were here have moved away and the town has filled up with new ones. Of course I can't mention numbers of anything, but I think it's all right to say that if the plans aren't changed we'll have to have a real live ~~all~~ ~~Y~~ ~~here~~ ~~to~~ ~~eat~~ ~~the~~ ~~dead~~ this winter. It's such an interesting proposition that I'm almost reconciled to missing the move to Mr. Randall's division. At this instant moment we're at the very lowest possible ebb. My two details moved out with the rest of their company and so far I've no new ones, so 14 year old Marie and I are alone on the job. We had to close down both yesterday and today through the day time, but we opened last night as usual, although hot chocolate was out of the question. Tonight I've promised it. If the expected detail doesn't turn up I'll put it through with volunteers. The detail I've had were just careless boys- perfectly nice and perfectly honest but one was so lazy he had to be nagged (which we both hated) and the other so slipshod he wasted crackers and cigarettes and broke bottles and let the place get in awful confusion. So even here, at lowest ebb, I'm feeling freer and more confident than I have since I've come. I didn't bounce the boys because we expected them to move out any day and I wasn't sure myself of staying so, so far, it's been one make shift and let-well-enough- alone after another. Now we're going to do things right!

It's going to be too big a job for me to handle alone I think, so I've put in an application at the Paris office for another woman to join me. In a way I hated to do it. I've worked entirely alone so far and it's been pretty severe discipline at times, but it's been such an entirely new experience that I've felt perhaps it was pretty healthy for me. Then too it's such a lottery - who you get to work with - that I'm hesitant about trying it. It would be lots pleasanter to be alone than to work with many of the people I've come in contact with. For those two reasons I'd made up my mind not to apply for a companion, but these new developments have made me change my mind. It's going to be more than any one person can handle, and if only I have luck and get a good person, it will help tremendously. Sometimes two heads are better than a dozen. I've hope too, of getting a really good one for I was able to talk myself with the women who handle the assignments. We've had a flood of inspectors lately and so I showed them just what's needed. That means they'll take a more personal interest and not just ship down the next woman who comes to the office. I've said I could wait a month if necessary. Here's hoping!

Our new Divisional Secretary came up here yesterday and went over the "plant" with me. He has promised to send me a carpenter on Monday and I'm planning great things. There's absolutely no way of locking anything up now, except by putting it in the 6 X 10 storehouse. I'm going to get the carpenter to build me a store closet with a lock, inside the tent, and also to put doors and locks on the sections under the counter, and after we get a few things like that done I'll turn the store room into a kitchen (6 X 10!) and so have a shelter for the dishwashing on cold winter nights. I think it's going to be fine but the thing that troubles me is that the tent is so much too small that we'll have to do something about it. I guess that just as I get all nicely in running order we'll get a hut built or find a barn or something we can hire- and move! "C'est la guerre".

Would you like a schedule of my day yesterday? I got up late (I always do): breakfasted on thermos coffee, bread and butter. Many a morning I've been reduced to the bread and butter without the coffee, sometimes without the butter too, so I felt luxurious. I'd fixed up the daily accounts the evening before so I didn't have to worry over them, as I usually do mornings, so I reached the tent at about 10 o'clock to find the truck with supplies - which always runs Sat. afternoons- already there. That upset my apple cart completely for I'd arranged with Marie and Mme Morin at Contres to bake for me Saturday morning and send the cakes by the return truck Saturday afternoon. However, Widmeyer, the driver, said he guessed he'd make another trip in the afternoon anyway for he'd stolen some tables and benches for me. So off he went. I asked him to bring me a case of candles for his next trip but he said the warehouse was out of them. That was news indeed for we hadn't more than six candles left and we burn about two dozen every night. To tell the truth I was rather