

28th October to 10th Nov. 1918

Oh joy, Family, I'm going to have a real honest to goodness hut! Mr. Helms told me yesterday that we seemed to be a "live" town and he felt justified in sidetracking a hut already ordered for one of the big camps and giving it to me instead. The big camp already has one real hut and can make out with additional tents so its not as mean as it sounds. It will mean everything to have a wooden building here. I shant know how to behave, I've lived in a tent so long! It will mean a lot more work and planning and a whole set of new problems, but it also will mean a far greater opportunity of making the men comfortable and of entertaining them. It will also mean that that long deferred helper of mine is really essential, but as it may be a month or six weeks before I get the hut there's still time to wait for her. Only there are so many things which could be done in advance. I'm going to begin buying curtain material and maps and posters and things next week. I don't want the place to seem barn-like even for a day if I can help it. Won't it be fun?

I'll have a corner for a library and writing room and I'll hitch my darling new-made kitchen on behind and serve real food, and there'll be actual solid walls for decoration and I think - a real stage at one end for performances! What more could the heart of man (or woman) desire? I do hope I shall be able to find some soft blue-green stuff to make a stage background. I'm going to Blois next week to hunt.

Of course I'm planning a show already. I was talking over Christmas plans with the Chief today and I suddenly wondered whether I couldn't get up a Mystery Play here. I'd have to use the French children - maybe- their priest wouldn't let them and as few soldiers as I could manage. Also practically no rehearsals, and no parts to learn and very simple costumes--but I'm not sure it couldn't be done. I've two months to think it over. Oh for the Brearley children! Nothing could be as lovely as some of their Christmas plays--but I haven't watched them all these years in vain. Well, we'll see. A lot will depend upon if, and when, I get my helper and what kind of a person she is. There's only one thing sure; some sort of a Christmas is coming to St. Romain.

So many problems. The hut will be 30 X 100 feet and our present space isn't big enough. I've already begun operations to try to secure a better site, but may have troubles. O'Roulk is doing his best for me, and if an Irish Tammanyite with a slice of the Blarney stone in his pocket can't wheedledeed even a Frenchman I'll realize it just can't be done!

In the meantime - our new stove is fine - when it doesn't smoke. I'm serving coffee now on Sunday afternoons but we have to wait longer than we should for hot water.

1st Nov. This is my day of reckoning! I do not leave the first of the month. It means not only the customary weekly financial report but also a complete inventory of stock on hand. Believe me, some job.

This morning I was particularly crabby because two Educational Secretaries descended upon me full of all sorts of impossibilities. I hate to seem cold to educational schemes but the number of classes and organizations they want is really one beyond the last straw. I've promised to back anything they will do, and to try to put on a class in French history myself, thats about my limit. They scared me though by suggesting that I might have to switch to the Ed. Dept. I don't want to! I honestly believe I'm doing better work along these general lines than I could in teaching. Besides its a very different matter teaching nice little girls something you know by heart than teaching full grown men something you're pretty shaky about. Somehow I don't believe it will happen though. I shant worry unless the blow falls. Undoubtedly when peace comes, the Y can do its best work along educational lines and its coming so soon that it will have to get busy. Good speed to the teachers. I'd rather put my energies into trying to put something homelike into the lives of these homesick boys.