

It's been a long and tiring day. I've had several discouraged hours over my general inability to make everything go in just the best way, but, as always, the evening cheered me up. Evenings always do, I just love them. This evening especially because two of the boys told me that our tent was the most homelike spot they'd seen in France. Wouldn't that pay for any amount of annoyance! There is a pleasant atmosphere about it. It's not very business-like, nor as neat as it ought to be, but I can't help believing a little of my very great desire to give them pleasure must get over. Those two boys, tonight, spoke as though it did anyway, and made me feel very happy and infinitesimally small.

One thing happened tonight. Some boys were singing revival hymns at the piano. They had lovely faces but their voices - Oh my! Never mind, they were having the time of their lives, and a pretty big group gathered around. Some liked it, but a couple of men began to jeer. They said some pretty strong things and I got uneasy. One sneered "Oh this is the Y.M.C.A." and they snickered. I stood it for a while but realized that it was pretty much up to me, so when a pause came in the music I called for attention. Things stopped. I said - well I can't go into all I did say, but the gist of it was that it was the Young Men's Christian Association and if they didn't care to realize that there was no particular need of their presence. I said they could jolly all they pleased but that they mustn't jeer, that they were more than welcome on those terms - not on any others. It certainly scared me to talk that way! My heart dropped a beat or two, but it just had to be done, and there was no one else to do it. Some of the boys clapped so I guess it got over. Later one of them came up to me and thanked me for saying it. The revivalists went right on for a while, then popular songs began and went on all evening. Last night they sang a lot too - we're feeling good these days! The song they put most feeling into was a new one to me though apparently an old one in the army. To the tune of John Brown's Body:

"All you got to do is sign the payroll,  
All you got to do is sign the payroll,  
All you got to do is sign the payroll,  
And you don't get a god darn cent!"

Some song? You ought to see their faces as they sing. I keep seeing them as they must have looked when they were little boys and getting ideas of how their mothers must feel about them. Such sweet faces, a lot of them have, clean and straight and fine. Of course there are the other kind too, but the great majority are grand. One of them said tonight - "I know you're interested in how things go, I see you watching the fellers as they go in and out" and I replied "I think mostly of how proud I am to be an American woman". Another pleasant thing happened today. I'm eating now at the officers' mess, though I often take my mess kit and join the men. I asked today - being the first of the month - how much it was. (the last company charged 5 francs a day and boasted of their mess but it was neither so good nor so plentiful as this - this is really good). Lieutenant Prentice said "Why it would hurt our feelings if you paid, you are our guest" I protested, but saw he meant it so subsided gratefully. Wasn't it nice of him.

Nov. 7 - Such a funny place as I'm writing in today. A weensy hotel dining room which you enter through the kitchen - which is also the family living room. There is no rug or carpet and the paper is peeling off the walls and there's a sepulchral white oilcloth long table, but there's a real stove in one corner and a comforting sound of flames beginning to leap. Its cold and wet outside, but who cares. I've no good explanation to offer for being here either; I had some business in Blois and a friendly lieutenant offered me a hitch. When we passed through Blois I decided to go on for the ride (cold, wet, windy, bare country, open car curtained in, but a spree) and do my job on the way home, so now the lieutenant is off loading up a lot of trucks and I'm amusing myself while waiting for lunch. My pass reads only "Blois" and I've an idea I may be A.W.O.L. (absent without leave) that is out of bounds, but there isn't an M.P. in sight so that just adds the necessary touch of excitement. There are four of us for lunch. Two soldiers, the lieutenant and myself. I would have accomplished more if I'd stayed at Blois, but the L. couldn't tell within four hours when he'd be coming back, so it seemed wiser to stick by the car.