

Nantes 24th Feb. 1919

Dearest Family:

What do you suppose I did yesterday - picked primroses! On they were such darling babies, I just shivered for joy when I found them. They aren't out yet at St. Romain although I've seen leaves there. We have violet leaves too and I believe some have actually found the violets but I've seen nothing myself yet except wee, modest, crimson tippit daisies. The sweetest, tiniest, bravest little blossoms you ever saw; scattered over a perfectly bare, soggy, hopeless field, all dull brown and prickly. And then suddenly you come upon these darlings and something twists inside of you. They give you the same feeling you get from a baby's first vague little smile. But of the primroses! Especially when you hadn't expected any flowers to be out, and didn't even know that primroses grew in France. It wasn't France, it was England I wandered in yesterday, a sunken lane with all sorts of green things just beginning on its banks, just enough to make you forget you were walking in streams of water, because you had to watch every inch of the roadside, in a kind of hope too shy to be spoken. And then just think! Primroses!

Incidentally it poured rain all the time and I had on the only hat and suit I'd brought with me, but I just didn't care.

By this time I suppose you've read my heading and see I'm at Nantes - I really am! I'm on a leave, visiting Priscilla. It seems absurd to take a leave when I've only 3 more weeks to go before the job is up; if everything hadn't been just as it was I wouldn't have done it, but it is. I mean, it's all running so smoothly now I feel I'm not needed. F.T. is well and is thoroughly on the job. I've hired Renee to come to the tent mornings as well as evenings and that relieves F.T. from the necessity of getting up early, or indeed of being at the tent in the morning at all. We have exceeding good soldier help, and for almost the first time since September supplies are coming regularly and plentifully. Before I left I salvaged the inside lining of one of the evacuated Y tents which is not nearly so torn as our "rag house" and I found a couple of old women who undertook to wash it the day I left. When I get back we'll get it up - if F.T. doesn't do it in the interval - and I'm going to take back some fresh garlands and things for decoration from here. Except for that there really doesn't seem to be any real need of my going back at all. That job is done.

If St. Romain is to be continued as a Signal Corps replacement depot as I believe is the plan now, it will mean only between three and six hundred men - an easy job. And if F.T. is to be High Boss when I go I don't want to take the reins back for just the couple of weeks more I shall be there. I shall try to swap jobs with her and be assistant for that time - but it will come hard, we're both so used to the other way round. It doesn't seem fair to her, though, not to try.

I'm waiting with a certain amount of excitement for news from Paris. I told you, I think, in my last letter that Mrs. Mead had written to me asking me to go to Germany. I answered that I understood that that would mean continuing my contract for another four months and I did not feel that I could agree to that (You see I wouldn't have time, after that, to get all rested and to prepare, as well as I shall have to, for school again in October). So I was sorry, but I had to decline. I sent that to her by someone who left for Paris on the 15th. The day before I came here Mr. Miller (Mr. Helm's successor) showed me a telegram from Mrs. Mead: "Mildred DuBois wanted for Army of Occupation, please release her as soon as possible." That was dated 17 Feb. Don't you see the puzzle. Mrs. Mead ought to have received my letter on the 16th but may not have done so. If she did her telegram means that she'll send me to Germany for a short time, if she didn't it means that she won't send me at all.

Mr. Miller telegraphed back "DuBois on leave, if wanted for one month telegraph" And then I sent word to Mrs. Mead by Miss Colvin explaining the situation. If she'd take me for a month or six weeks so that I could be at home by May, I'd leap at the chance, but if it means the whole four months I just can't.

How this "going to Germany" has been up and down, up and down, ever since I came! I think there's about one chance in two thousand of it now, but even that one chance is enough to keep me a little on edge. However, I don't care so very much if the two thousand win.