

Wed March 1919

Dear Family:

I've just finished what is probably my last job of any importance in the "V" - putting up a clean linen in the tent.

There is a rumor that Pershing is to inspect this area tomorrow and of course no one knows which town he may choose to look over or which outfit he may inspect or which company may have to drill. We probably won't know that St. Remain is on the way but by word! Now everyone is slicking up! We feel, in common with everyone in the division, that as sure as we're not ready for him we'll be elected. Contres, Condies, St. Remain, Nevers, St. Aignan - all along the line everyone has put in a busy day. There are so few men here I was afraid we might not be able to join the general house-cleaning for want of a detail, but the Captain sent three sergeants to the tent this afternoon and Roger, Lyons turned up and a stray Captain helped (until he began to get dirty!) and we finished the job. I wrote you that I'd salvaged another tent-lining and was having it washed while I was away. Two old women dipped it in the river and hauled it out and beat it with little wooden shovels and tipped again, and dipped and hauled and beat until it was fairly clean. - In comparison with the old it glistens!

It was some job chancing. I'm pretty tired tonight - I never could direct work, you know, without pitching in myself. Roger was frightfully amused, heaven only knows what he'll tell the family.

And oh but we look nice and clean. Its torn a little, I noticed where I could see we went along, mostly with wire. I couldn't get the garlands I'd wanted at Mantea so we've nothing but Japanese lanterns after all, but we have lots of those. F.T. and some men are putting them up tonight - we'll be quite gay. I want awfully to get some real live garlands - laurel and holly leaves. Couldn't they make it pretty? I shant worry though - its up to F.T. Its her tent now, I'm just trying to leave everything in absolute order before I go. The accounts are straight the tent clean, the outstanding bills settled, the French hair assured, and she has a good detail. I don't see just what more I could do.

I saw Mr. Miller yesterday and he has released me - as soon as I finish all these finalities. I feel tonight that they are done - my job is done. It is a week yet before the conclusion of my term of service, but I see no reason to prevent my going to Paris and using that last week to untie the red tape necessary as a preliminary to homegoing.

I have not reassumed the responsibility of "But Secretary" since I came back from Mantea. I found things going so well and F.T. so sparkling with plans and energy and enthusiasm that I felt it would be unfair to take the reins again just for two weeks and then give them back. I advocated in her favor.

Its been a queer selection. She is thoroughly capable, I'm not sure her decisions and plans aren't wiser than mine, but - they're different. I feel exactly like the ghost of a mother watching her children being cared for by an entirely competent, kind, and satisfactory step-mother. I have loved my children very much. Its hard to leave them. But I feel quite strongly - my job is done. Amen!

Tomorrow, after the excitement of General Pershing's visit is over, I'm planning to call on Colonel Matthews to get my release from the Division and then to hunt up a time table and get my movement orders. By Wednesday afternoon I hope to move. Its pretty exciting, I don't in the least realize yet that I'm going to leave, nor that I'm really on the way home, only a quick peep back at a glimpse of the evening star over the river poplars and a rush of affection even for the naughty small boys I chase out of the tent. I shall miss St. Remain; I've tried Paris and honestly wanted to get away, but for a' that I've loved it here.