

July 15-18

We never sell less than about 7 gallons a day of punch and about the same amount of hot chocolate. I have a huge can - as big as an ash can, and we boil that, full, every morning for the next day's supply. The water for the chocolate we boil in the late afternoon in three smaller cans, so that we can use it in more manageable quantities.

I've been cooking quite a little lately. I told you of oatmeal cookies, and then I stole an idea from the woman in another "Y" and now I make sandwiches of crackers with a soft fudge filling. I tried a real cake yesterday but it was pretty poor. However, I camouflaged it with a covering of chocolate and chopped almonds and I sold 125 pieces. It was all gone an hour before closing time. Horrid stuff too, all lardy. I'll know how to do it better next time. No matter how bad a thing is though, if only it's a little "homemade" it sells faster than you can get it out of the pan. Sometimes the men help. It's lot of fun to have a boy beat eggs while he tells you all about his family, or to give another the spoon to lick after you've finished mixing. Just at the critical moment in my cake baking yesterday one of them came to tell me all about his girl, and I had to leave the cake to Marie. He was pretty interesting and his story sounds like a melodrama. There is every necessary element in it for a "thriller". American man, private, but good connections- father a mayor, uncle a colonel- French girl, no parents, stubborn uncle- French count, dissipated, wants the girls-property to be inherited only if she marries a Frenchman. Uncle for count, girl for private. What more do you want? Add that the man's mother was French, that his grandfather was Irish, and that he is a -- no, I guess I can't tell you what part of the United States he comes from for we're not supposed to give any information about troops, but anyway his temperament is not cold. He's an architect, she's an artist, he speaks very little French, she very little English. Voila! He gave me a letter to her to translate into French. Some letter! With the help of the old lady of my chateau I worked over it for an hour and a half- and got only one sixth done. I hated to fail him, but it wasn't a letter, it was a volume. He presented me next day with a little paper cutter "From a grateful American". I wish I could have earned it better.

Another boy spent an hour the other evening when business was slack, leaning over the counter telling me about his school-teacher. He said I reminded him of her. She'd had him for seven years and he was very fond of her. Such a simple boy, I suppose about 18 or 20 but really like a nice seven year old. So proud of his handwriting! He showed me with his left hand what it used to be like and with his right what it is now. There wasn't much difference but I didn't tell him so.

The other evening I got off my bicycle (Yes, I get around on one now) and asked one of the boys to hold it while I went into a shop. When I came out he said "couldn't believe you was speaking to me, I aint heard an American woman speak for so long". My bicycle is a funny affair, much too small, with a broken spring, a perpetually flat hind tire, and a coaster brake that doesn't brake. I passed some boys the other day and called out "If this thing doesn't break my neck I'll be lucky" "We sure do hope you'll be lucky" two or three said