

## A Volunteer's Story

Letter diary of volunteer Marian Bartol, 1920–21

*The Morgan Library & Museum, gift of John G. Bartol, 1992*

Thirty-year-old Philadelphian Marian Grier Bartol joined the American Committee for Devastated France in 1920 and served a six-month tour, assigned to work alongside French women in the community store in Blérancourt. In nearly four hundred pages of letters home, written in continuous diary form, she cheerfully described the day-by-day experiences of a typical post-war volunteer. She delighted in shopping, sightseeing, and socializing when she arrived in Paris, but adjusted with aplomb to simple life in the volunteers' barracks. "I am feeling splendidly," she told her aunt and sister after she had settled in Blérancourt. "The out-of-door life suits me perfectly, and since I have gotten accustomed to the coarse bread, my digestion equals an ostrich." As she got to know the people of the devastated regions, she wondered if "America should have come into the war sooner, before such terrific sacrifices were required of France."

Bartol came from a prominent Philadelphia family with a home just off Rittenhouse Square, and her voyages to and from Europe were covered in the social pages of the *Inquirer*. At the time she joined the American Committee, several members of Bartol's family had already provided wartime service. Her brother Grier, who met her in Paris, served in France with the U.S. Army's Field Artillery Branch; her brother George joined the Army Signal Corps; her Aunt Kate worked in the Paris office of the American Committee for Devastated France; and Anne Farr, a cousin and fellow volunteer, welcomed Marian in Blérancourt. On the home front, Marian's father, George E. Bartol—founder and longtime president of the Philadelphia Bourse—saw to it that army, navy, and marine recruitment booths were set up on the Bourse's main floor. Under his direction, the Bourse also founded a domestic program to support American farm families whose sons had gone to war and established a marine engineering school to train crews for transatlantic service. Bartol's father died in 1917, before the war was over. As she described the colorful group of volunteers with whom she served in post-war France, Marian admitted to her aunt and sister that "father would have hated these modern, independent women."

*Note that Marian Bartol's letters make reference to four different women named Anne: in New York, Bartol stayed at the apartment of a friend, Anne Hall; in Blérancourt she lived with her cousin Anne Farr, who would later marry Bartol's brother Grier; Anne Morgan and Anne Murray Dike, heads of the American Committee for Devastated France, are also cited in the letters, but always with their surnames. Bartol also mentions several Katherines: her Aunt Kate, who lived in Paris and worked with the American Committee for Devastated France; Kate's daughter, Katherine, who also lived in Paris; and Kate Lewis, a fellow volunteer, who sailed to France with Marian.*

Letter dated 5 August 1920

1 Lexington Avenue [New York]  
August 5th

Dear Auntie & Eleanor,

I have had a most successful day since I left you at 7:41 this morning. I traveled up to New York with Mrs. Whittaker, and discovered that she was born in Mississippi, and that her maiden name was Meade. Her uncle married a Miss Shields from *Natchez*! I met George [Marian's brother] as per appointment in the station, and we retrieved my two trunks from the baggage room, and, placing them advantageously on a taxi, we drove to the French Line's dock, at the foot of West 15th Street. It certainly is far more convenient than taking a boat from Hoboken. We left the trunks, got receipts for them, and then got in the taxi and drove to Gabriella's, where I left my bag, coat, and umbrella. We met her just coming out of the door and she insisted on George spending the night here, as in Anne Hall's absence, she has two spare rooms. So he is here also.

Then we took the subway to Battery Park to get my sailing permit. That took about thirty minutes standing in line, in the usual Government way of doing business. After that George showed me the Curb market which I had never seen before, then we took lunch together at the Lafayette. After lunch I went to Gay's and got washed and rested before going to see Miss Caldwell [a representative of the American Committee for Devastated France]. After my interview with her, I did a little shopping and then went back to the Committee's rooms for tea.

The other members of the party are five in number. First, Mrs. Wilson, who has been over twice before with the Committee, about 45; second, Miss Rockwell, Kansas City, about 40; third, Miss Clark, from Boston, 25 + or -; Miss Shaw (who goes to Prouts Neck [Maine] in summer and knows all the Farris) about 38; Miss Lewis, from Chicago, about 30, and very pretty, worked as an ambulance driver in France during the war. They seem like a very nice group and I am sure will be nice to travel over with. I do not know which one I will room with yet, but I understand the *Savoie* has no upper berths, just two lower ones in each room. Miss Lewis has used Mothersill's [a remedy for seasickness] very successfully, so I am most hopeful of equally good results. Aunt Kate is to be the official chaperone residing in Paris until Oct. 1st so I ought to have a good time. After that Mrs. Tracy, Miss Morgan's aunt [sister-in-law of Anne Morgan's mother, Frances], takes it for several months. Gay does not know any further details of Anna's death. She had always had a weak heart, but it was not considered serious until two months ago.

My boat sails at noon tomorrow, so I will go on board about 10 a.m. Typhus is carried by body lice, so all they had to do was to fumigate the steerage etc. Miss Caldwell had not received a letter from Aunt Kate since she landed, so I think all the French mail was delayed. You two are certainly great to make it so easy for me to take this trip. Love to Kingsley and a great deal for both of you.

Affectionately, Marian

Letter dated 6 August 1920

*A bord de "Savoie"*  
Aug. 6th 1920

Dear Auntie & Eleanor,

Here I am on board the *Savoie*—George brought me over in a taxi from Gay's and I fulfilled all the necessary sailing formalities without any trouble. George was not allowed to come on board, only passengers. I met three other members of the Committee as soon as I got on the ship, each of whom had been seen off by a brother.

My cabin has a new white enamel wash stand in it, instead of the old fashioned wooden ones, customary to the German liners. The boat is very clean, and has no perceptible odor of oil cloth. This latter fact may be due to the dose of Mothersill's Remedy which I took before coming on board. I got deck chairs for all of our party on the starboard side of the deck. My room-mate is Mrs. Wilson, the most experienced traveler, and oldest member of our party, so I will be well taken care of—I am enclosing a letter I got from Margaret Felton. Perhaps that small Maltese kitten back of the Man house would do for her, if you can catch it. I received your night lettergram also the letter enclosing Pet's, and a letter from Mary Smith, but none from H. Smith. So far we are just leaving the dock now, and will have lunch as soon as we start down the river. I will try to send George a postal before we get off, but if I don't, thank him for seeing me off.

With lots of love,  
Affectionately, Marian

Please mail me some magazines from time to time c/o Morgan Harjes & Co. [the Paris affiliate of J.P. Morgan & Co.]

Letter dated 7–14 August 1920

*La Savoie*  
August 7th

Dear Auntie & Eleanor,

It is almost noon on Saturday and we are bowling along through the Gulf Stream. So far Mothersill's has been entirely successful and not only have I not had the least feeling of sea-sickness, but I have enjoyed my meals in the dining room! Auntie will hardly believe that, as she knows my usual record. I am hoping I will continue as well during the whole trip. The ocean is bright blue today and dotted with white caps. Yesterday afternoon and during the first part of the night we ran through little patches of fog, but the fog horn on this boat is much sweeter than the *Mexicano*'s. The people on board are largely French, consequently even after we passed the three mile zone no one got drunk. Miss Caldwell carefully warned Miss Shope and Miss Clark about speaking to any strange men on the boat, but said nothing to Miss Lewis or me, consequently we are much set up. The Miss Rockwell in our party is a niece of Mrs. Chaffee, a great friend of Gabriella's mother. She comes from Kansas City. We have seats in the dining room at a table which holds eight, and so far there is no one else at the table but our party. I will continue this letter tomorrow.

Sunday

The smooth weather is continuing and also the heat. Today I changed to my white clothes and it is almost too warm for my sweater. Three of the other members of the Committee also play bridge, not for stakes, and we have had several good games. Between us all, we have about thirty books, several

baskets of fruit, boxes of candy etc. The other passengers on board are largely French and South Americans, not many citizens of the U.S. The boat is full, but not crowded, and there are very few children in the first cabin. There are about 175 people in the first class. I am sending you our dinner menu of today. It is a fair example of our meals, which are excellent, and quickly served.

They prefer to bring your coffee and rolls to your room in the morning in true French style, instead of serving breakfast in the dining room. But there are a few Americans who will eat there. I am going to give you a brief description of the different members of our party. There are six of us, and a friend of Mrs. Rockwell's who is crossing with her. She is Mrs. Vernon, a very capable woman who has been the head of the Women's College in Madrid, Spain, for many years, and who is now on her way there for a visit of inspection. Mrs. Rockwell is about 40, slightly grey, slim, and very attractive. She comes from Kansas City, and is quite Western and breezy, and very nice.

Miss Lewis comes from Springfield, Ill. She is about my age, a graduate of Vassar, and great fun. She has curly brown hair and is a Presbyterian. During the war she got gassed with mustard gas, and still has trouble with her throat. Her brother was on [General John J.] Pershing's staff. We hope to be able to keep together and both act as chauffeurs for the Committee. Mrs. Wilson is rather an unknown quantity. Her age is uncertain, and she is strictly a man's woman. I can't just make out why she is with the Committee as she does not seem to me to be the kind they usually select. She served with the Y.M.C.A. during the war. I think she is quite bored with all of us, as she only plays cards for stakes, and likes to smoke constantly. Her French is negligible, as she is just starting to study it. Miss Shope is from Brooklyn, N.Y., and is being sent over to do clerical work with her expenses paid by the Committee. She looks something like Hannah Wright, but is prettier, and very good company. Priscilla Clark is the youngest member of our party. She is about 25, and is also having her expenses paid by the Committee. I think she is a little homesick, as she has never been away from home before. She comes from Newton, a suburb of Boston. I found I could get a stateroom to myself, so moved into it today. It gives me much more room, and is much nicer, it is quite near the other one, with the same steward.

Monday

The good weather continues. Last night we were off the Grand Banks, and had some fog, but Today has been clear, and much cooler which is a great relief. Some of our South American passengers got a Victrola this evening and have been dancing the Tango very beautifully. We have several Spaniards on board, and the men wear little flat black cloth caps with a tiny tassel on the top. There are a few celebrities. Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Thaw, Mrs. Harry Lehr, and a French tenor, who gets quite hilarious every evening after dinner. There are several colored people travelling first class, but I understand they are from Brazil, or somewhere down there. We also have a party of Spanish nuns, who eat modestly in the children's dining room, and retire each evening at 8:45.

Wednesday

I didn't write anything yesterday as I usually write in the evening, and it was too rough. We ran into quite a heavy sea about noon, which continued until almost morning. As Father used to say, "if this weather continues, it may be a little rough." Several of our party retired to their rooms, but I did not get sick, strangely enough, I went to bed about 9:30, to read in bed, but fell asleep almost immediately and slept till ten this morning, I have been boasting to the others of what a wretched sailor I am, and made them all promise to come to my cabin to see how I am, if at any time I do not appear. So far it has not been necessary.

I understand that the Hotel Petrograd is like the Y.W.C.A., and that it is hard to secure even a double room, as most of the rooms are like barracks, with eight or more beds. So Mrs. Lewis and I are going to go to the Hôtel de France et de Choiseul if we can get in there. I will find out where Aunt Kate and also Grier [Marian's brother] are staying, and we may stay with them.

Four of our party are Presbyterians, and the other two Episcopalians. I always knew that Presbyterians were progressive and now this proves it. The only service on board on Sunday was an early mass held by all the nuns and attended by a large number. I did not know about it in time, or I would like to have gone too.

We have made very good runs, about 400 miles each day, and will probably reach Havre on Saturday. There are three dogs on board, Mrs. Thaw's Irish terrier, Mrs. Lehr's Pekinese, and a South American black and tan terrier. They are in charge of the butcher and are only allowed to walk on the boat deck, but I can hear their voices above me quite plainly when they take the air. It makes me miss the "Black Boy." Yesterday morning we passed a whale, but he was not spouting, also two other steamers. This is one of the nicest boats I have ever been on, good food, very clean, and steady. I must stop now, and go to lunch, before the doors close.

Thursday

Last evening we had an entertainment by a hypnotist in the Salon. Someone bet him \$10. that he could not hypnotize one of the passengers. He blindfolded her and did it most successfully, making her talk Portuguese, a language she did not know, find various hidden articles etc. It was most interesting and most uncanny. To-night he is going to do a man, and there are many bets on.

Yesterday was Mrs. Wilson's birthday, and a young Brazilian who now sits at our table, named Legori, ordered a bottle of champagne to celebrate it. So we all drank her health, and as usual I took as little as possible. I hope they won't discover that today is mine.

We are having a continuous bridge game during the voyage, Miss Lewis and Miss Shope against Miss Rockwell and me. At the end of the trip the losing side will treat the others to tea in Paris. So far we are behind, due in part to Miss R's fatal habit of doubling, and some rather indifferent assistance I have given her. Yesterday however I played two grand slam no trump hands in succession and redeemed myself.

Mrs. Wilson has picked up almost all the men on board by now, and informed us yesterday that our party was the object of great interest to the other passengers, who have now decided that it is a tour, personally conducted by Mrs. Vernon, Miss R's friend. They have also nicknamed all of us, but we have not discovered what the names are yet. It seems to me they spend unnecessary time watching us on deck and in the dining room. The weather continues good and sea smooth. Yesterday we ran through little fog banks all day. We expect to land on Saturday.

Friday

We have made very good runs for the last few days, and apparently should reach Havre about one o'clock tomorrow afternoon, which will get us to Paris about 10 p.m. I understand the resident chaperone, at present Aunt Kate, meets us at the train.

Last night the hypnotist gave another performance. Great excitement prevailed and the bets were \$200. against him, as the man he was going to do was not a good subject. It took him almost ten minutes but he finally succeeded, and while the man was hypnotized, made him do various things. It was most uncanny, but intensely interesting, to see one person so completely under the will power of another.

The rest of our party found out that yesterday was my birthday, I suppose from my passport, which I had showed to one of them. All went smoothly till dinner time and I hoped it was forgotten. But when dinner was half way over, our steward brought in, triumphantly, and placed in front of me, a small cake, with "Bartol, Aug 12th" in white icing on it, also a quart of champagne, with which they drank my health etc. It was awfully nice of them, but I felt rather foolish as it was quite conspicuous. However Miss Lewis's is the second of September, so I am waiting! Today all of us who have uniforms, four, are going to wear them to lunch to give the other passengers something to talk about. It will be fun. I have discovered that Miss Rockwell, a Wellesley graduate, is an architect, and lives six mos. in Kansas City and six in Italy at Assisi, where her sister and Italian brother-in-law have a villa (remodeled by her).

Saturday

Due to certain Harbor and Custom House regulations at Havre, we will not land Today, but at six tomorrow (Sunday) morning. I would really rather land then, as it will let us see the trip from Havre to Paris by daylight, and it is said to be very beautiful. This letter will return on the *Lafayette*, which sails for N.Y. today so you should get it in ten days. I will send a cable as soon as I land.

This morning the gulls are following our boat, and we are passing a great number of small boats, North Sea trawlers etc. We cannot see land, as it is too misty.

Last evening we had a very informal concert in the salon, a pianist (our table companion), a flutist (a young Cuban who won the Damrosch scholarship in N.Y.), two opera singers, a violinist, and two dancers. One was a young Frenchman who danced a fancy Spanish dance, accompanying himself with imaginary castanettes. He is quite effemine [sic] looking, and would make a wonderful leading lady for the Mask & Wig, as I never saw more graceful dancing.

Miss Lewis and I wore our uniforms and overseas caps at lunch yesterday. At the last minute the other two backed out, but we had unpacked ours and couldn't bear to put them away without using them. They made the hit we hoped they would, so we kept them on during the afternoon. They are certainly much more becoming than the Red Cross ones. Miss Lewis' brother works in the passenger department of the Reading Railroad and lives in Philadelphia at the Princeton Club. His name is Philemon Lewis.

At dinner last evening the Head Steward presented us with a little cake with "Comité Américain" in icing on the top, so we ordered a bottle of champagne to drink the Committee's health. To-night we have to wear our travelling dresses, as our trunks have to leave our staterooms before dinner. I cannot get a long envelope on board, so will have to stuff this letter into a small one. As soon as I get to Paris I will buy some to fit this paper. I think I made a mistake in not bringing my short fur (coney) coat with me. I wish when you are in Philadelphia you would see if it is possible to send it to me by the American Express Co., insured for its full value. Of course it may not be possible, and in that case let me know, and I will buy a leather coat over here, but I would really like the fur one. The Wanamaker storage receipt for it is, as E. [her sister, Eleanor] knows, in the small drawer of the safe. This is the only thing I did not bring, which I think I need.

There are two French consuls on board, from Chicago and San Francisco. The Chicago one has picked us up, and Miss Lewis and I have been practicing our French on him. I expect to stay about a week in Paris (if Grier is there) and then report for work. Give my love to Kingsley. I hope she is continuing to enjoy Bay Head. I have certainly missed the ocean bathing. Also remember me to the girls.

With lots of love for both of you,  
Affectionately, Marian

14e août, midi

Letter dated 16 August 1920

August 16th  
Paris

We finally docked at midnight on Saturday, but did not disembark until six on Sunday morning. The passengers for Southampton, however, were allowed to get off and take the Channel boat. The boat train for Paris was alongside of the dock, and we left Havre at eight. Just as we left I got two telegrams, one from Grier, saying he would meet us in Paris, and one from Aunt Kate saying she has reserved rooms at the Petrograd for two of the party and at the Cecilia for the other four. Mrs. Wilson decided she would find a hotel for herself.

We came here, and got a room, and after lunch the two from the Petrograd arrived post-haste. By some mistake there was no reservation for them, so at present there are four of us in one room here, Kate Lewis, Miss Clark, Miss Shope and myself. Tomorrow they are going to find a pension. Today is the Feast of the Virgin, and everything in Paris is closed. This hotel is on the Avenue MacMahon, about a block from the Arc de Triumphe [sic]. It is very nice, and we are living here, *en pension* for 35 francs a day, not quite \$3.00. The meals are delicious.

Grier [Marian's brother] met me at the Gare St. Lazare. He looks splendidly, has a fine coat of tan, and is just back in Paris, after fifteen days at a seashore resort, whose name I cannot remember, where he went with Paul Brown. He is living with him, and they are eating at different places. He expects to go to Antwerp on Thursday to fence in the Olympics, and to sail for home on the *La France* on August 28th, due about Sept. 5th.

We spent yesterday afternoon walking in the Bois while I told him all the home news and then had tea at the Pré Catalan, and he came back here for dinner. Today, Monday, he went to the Station with me and helped me get my trunks through the custom house and over to the hotel. My Innovation [luggage] travelled splendidly, as usual, with the exception of one package of sugar, which leaked out of the box, and sifted through the trunk pretty thoroughly. However that did not injure anything.

Grier got in touch with Didier [Marian's cousin], and brought him here for lunch. He is a *very* nice boy, attractive, clever and a good talker. In appearance he looks very much like Grier, a little taller, and more French looking. But he has a strong resemblance to Grier. He is working at present in the devastated regions at Rethel, so we may be near him, and will be able to see him on Sundays.

After lunch, which Kate Lewis had with us, Grier and I went to call on Aunt Kate, who had just returned from Soissons [one of the regional centers of the American Committee for Devastated France]. She is staying at Katherine's apartment. They had had no news from Henry or Katherine for

four weeks, so you see the mails are slow both ways, as Grier says he has written constantly. Anne [Farr] came in while we were there, for a few minutes. She was in Paris for two days and just returning to Blérancourt [headquarters of the American Committee for Devastated France], where she is running the general store. She loves the work and looks very well.

Aunt Kate looks very old, but seems in excellent spirits. She has promised to get Kate Lewis and me good positions, so that we can stay together. We are all going to report tomorrow morning, as the Office was closed today. After we left Aunt Kate, we came back to the hotel to pick up Kate Lewis and go out to tea in the Bois. She had a Frenchman, Max Vivier, calling on her, who had worked with Henry Bartol during the war, as liaison officer. He was much surprised to meet Grier and me. I kept Grier for dinner here, and he has just left me now, and I am up in our room writing to you. Tomorrow I have to go to get an identification card at the Police station, see Morgan Harjes, have my passport visaed, and get some laundry done.

With lots of love for all of you,  
Affectionately, Marian

Letter dated 19 August 1920

August 19th

I finally bought some long envelopes which will make it much easier to fold this paper. I am numbering the sheets consecutively, that is until I forget the sequence, but at present I know it. I think I wrote to you last on Monday night, and since then I have been going hard all the time.

On Tuesday morning we went en masse to call on Mrs. Dyke [Anne Dike, the American Committee's commissioner in France] at the Committee's headquarters, 15 Boulevard Lannes. Mrs. Dyke was away sick, but we saw Aunt Kate. She gave us a warm welcome, and we made appointments to see Mrs. D later in the week.

Then I went to Morgan Harjes. They have moved from the Boulevard Haussmann to a very impressive office on the Place Vendôme. Grier met me there, and introduced me to a Mr. Allen, one of the head men in the office. I got my account opened and he gave me a French check book, so that I could draw some money. Just then Algernon came in, and invited us to lunch with them at the Hotel Lotti, where they are staying. We met Didier outside and he joined the party, and we all lunched together. Mrs. C. is a nice little thing, quite pretty, and well bred. Grier is much pleased to have them in Paris, and rather undecided about leaving now, as Tom and his bride expect to be back here in a few days.

After a very good lunch, I went to the American Express Co. to see about having my coat shipped over, and they said it would be perfectly safe, and would take about two months at the longest. I then had my hair washed and *un peu ondulé* [waved] at a place opposite the Grand Hotel, and then met the other members of my party at Colombin's on the Rue Cambon, where Miss Rockwell and I treated the others to tea, as we had lost the bridge game on board ship by about 7000 points. Grier says we got off very cheaply.

In the evening three of us went to the movies at a theatre on the Avenue Wagram, a block from this hotel. We saw a very good performance, and it made me think of Bay Head, and our many good movie evenings there.



The next day, Wednesday, we began by getting a certificate of domicile from our concierge, and then had it stamped by the local *arrondissement*. We have to go to the Prefecteur de Police with these tomorrow, taking with us five photographs. After that Grier and I did some delightful sightseeing: we went through the Sainte Chapelle, and then walked slowly up thro' the Latin Quarter to the Church of St. Etienne du Mont. It is alongside of the Panthéon, and a most interesting old building. There was a box for offerings near the door marked *Pour la Propagation de la Foi*, and Grier said "Let's put a contribution in from Auntie." However I refrained.

After lunch, we joined Algernon and his wife, and went to see a very famous panorama picture called *Le Panthéon de la Guerre* [a cyclorama featuring some 5000 portraits of World War I era figures]. It was very interesting, and E. [Eleanor] would have been fascinated by the details of the painting. It took four years to do, and a good many artists, and contains groups of all the famous men of all the allied countries. The U.S. Group had of course Mr. Wilson, Secretary Daniels and Baker and all the Admirals and Generals.

After that we went to see Napoleon's Tomb. [Fighter pilot Georges] Guynemer's airplane is no longer there. We took tea at the Café des Ambassadeurs (my party). And then Grier came back with me for dinner. His room is quite near this hotel so he takes most of his meals with me, as the food here is unusually good. Kate Lewis had two friends dining with her, Mrs. Keck and Mme. Caumartin, Americans, who have lived here for years, so we all sat at the same table. Captain Caumartin (French navy) was expected also, but his boat was delayed and he did not arrive. However Grier is never daunted by any number of ladies, as you know, so we had a most amusing evening.

Today it was raining, the first we have had, and we had to go to the Committee's rooms to get the necessary papers to apply for a driver's license in France. It will take four days to get the necessary appointments, cost 15 f. and need four more photographs. I have never seen as much Red Tape as we have to go through. However Kate and I don't care how long they keep us in Paris, as long as Grier and a couple of her French army friends are here. We are already registered as being at work, so "I should worry."

Miss Rockwell has been made Sous-directrice at Coucy-le-Château [one of the regional centers of the American Committee for Devastated France]. Mrs. Wilson is being sent to Soissons [another of the Committee's regional centers], and the other two, to office work, somewhere, but so far Kate Lewis and I have not been told where we are going or what we are to do. Perhaps they don't know quite where to put us, but our French is quite the best of the party, so we are hopeful of something good.

I bought a raincoat and a hat this morning. The coat was a cravanette one, cut in the very latest style, and the hat a blue velvet one, with a thin blue ostrich feather, running across the top (ear to ear). I wanted a dressy one to wear with my grey chiffon and my dark blue serge.

This afternoon Aunt Kate had a small tea at her apartment, and asked Kate and me to help her serve tea. We were delighted and dressed up in our best. Mrs. Junius Morgan (N.Y.), Mrs. Burgess, Miss B. and Mr. B. (Boston) were there, also a Mr. Foster and Henri, who came in late. We stopped on our way there and bought all the supplies and then arranged the tea table, as Aunt Kate did not get away from the office until five. It was great fun. Mrs. M. is Miss Anne Morgan's sister-in-law [Mrs. Junius Morgan was not, in fact, Anne Morgan's sister-in-law; Anne Morgan did, however, have a cousin and niece by marriage named Mrs. Junius Morgan]. Aunt Kate would love to make a match between Anne and Billy Burgess, but as he is only nineteen, and a sophomore in Harvard, I don't think there is much

chance, especially as Anne is greatly bored with Billy. He is a nice boy and a good height for her. Aunt Kate is certainly a born match-maker.

Henri [Marian's cousin] looks rather like Kitty. He is a little shorter than Didier, and has more assurance in talking. He seems very nice, but Grier likes Didier the best. I don't know, as I have not seen enough of them to judge. He is going to lunch with us tomorrow, I will get to knowing him better then. Aunt Kate was much pleased with the success of the afternoon.

Yesterday Kate and I found we could get a room and a bath, so we moved out of the dormitory, and installed ourselves here. The room is smaller, but the bath makes up for it. The other members of our party have gone to the Folies Bergère, in a spirit of investigation of the music halls of Paris. They are not back yet, so I imagine the investigation is a thorough one. I have not received any letters yet, but did not expect to until next week. I am going to leave one of my trunks here, and probably take the Innovation with me into the country. I have carefully not asked how much baggage we are allowed, as I don't want to be restricted.

With lots of love for all of you.  
Affectionately, Marian

Letter dated 20 August 1920

August 20th

I find that most of the postals I have sent back to the States so far have had the wrong postage on them, ten centimes instead of fifteen centimes, so probably they will never arrive. However I will be careful in future.

Today we have spent in the toils of the Red Tape worm, beginning this morning with a visit to the Préfecture de Police to get our Cartes d'Identité. If you stay in France more than two weeks you have to get one. The Préfecture is on the Ile du Cité, so, armed with our passports, four photos, and a permit from the local *concièrgerie* we, Kate Lewis, Miss Clark, and I, got there at 9.45. There were only a few people ahead of us, so we didn't have to wait long. In at the desk we had to give our entire life history, going back one generation. This is in case you might be a German, or of German descent. I had to get twelve more pictures taken as I had used up all those I brought with me. If they are good, I will send you one.

After that Kate and I went to an office where we applied for permission to get permits to drive automobiles. Tomorrow we will take these first permits and get the second ones, then next week we have to pass an examination in driving, but we can take it in a Dodge, so it sounds really worse than it is.

We walked back home, about two miles, and it was a delicious walk. The weather is crisp, just warm enough not to need a coat, just a fur. Henri and Grier took lunch with us, and after lunch Grier and I climbed to the top of the Arc de Triomphe to see the view of Paris. It is quite a climb, up winding dark steps, but the view is worth it, a wonderful panorama of the City and the hills surrounding it. We got out our map and located all of the principal buildings. Tom and his bride arrived this morning, after a very hot trip to Venice and Bellagio. Of course this is not an auspicious time of year to go south. Grier took tea with them and Algernon and his wife. He called himself the fifth wheel, but seems to enjoy it.

This evening Henri came back to dinner and spent the evening with me, and Grier and Kate went to a theatre called Le Grand Guignol. It is full of grewsome horrors, so I would not go, and I knew I would not sleep after it. Henri is a good mixture of French and American. Didier is pure French. They are a remarkably nice pair of boys, but between them and Grier, my reputation at this hotel is entirely gone because they arrive at all hours and ask for me. The little hall boy comes up to my room, and calls me into the hall and whispers in a very knowing way, "*Il y a un monsieur en bas, qui vous demand.*" At first I tried to explain who they were, but it was useless, as I saw they didn't believe me, so now a different one eats with me almost every meal. Usually Kate Lewis eats with us also.

I tried to lead Henri on to talk of his father, but he would not say much, except that I would find his mother very much changed by the war and his grandfather's will. [Aunt Kate, Katherine, Henri, and Didier were contesting a family will that left most of the family assets to the Franklin Institute]. Marcel has been staying in Brittany and passed through Paris last week on his way to Lyons. Katherine's apartment is tiny, but exquisitely furnished with old furniture. The dining room has a tile floor, and all the rooms are heated by open grates. The kitchen and bath room are very primitive. There are pictures of all the different members of the family about the rooms, but none of Marcel [Katherine's estranged husband]. Henri expects to go out to Bagdad next month, but Didier is going into business in France.

I am going to describe the meals at this hotel, so you will know how we are living. For breakfast, which we have in our room, we have the usual coffee and hot milk and rolls. These are made of dark flour, but are very good. The butter is scarce, and we only have it at breakfast. We add some jam, which we buy outside. For lunch we have hors d'oeuvres, a fancy egg course, some hash or kidneys etc. and a green vegetable, and dessert, cheese or sweets. For dinner, soup, fish, meat and a vegetable, salad, water-ice or dessert. Coffee is extra, if you want it. The food is very good. I heard today the manager is thought to be a German.

With lots of love, Marian

Letter dated 22 August 1920

August 22nd

The weather continues clear and cool although our chambermaid complains of the heat. She has a sister who lives in New Orleans, and who writes her that the heat there is *incroyable*.

Yesterday morning I went to Morgan Harjes to see if there was any mail for me. There wasn't, but I met Tom and his bride, and had quite a talk with them. They were just back from Venice and left that evening for a trip to Tours and the Châteaux. They seem to be taking quite an extended and therefore costly honeymoon. Tom had his hat on slightly crooked, but looked very well and happy. I do not find myself particularly drawn to his bride, but she must be nice or Mary Schieffelin would not like her.

I got my new hat yesterday, and it is very becoming. I also got a smoke colored net veil to wear with it, which the milliner assured me was just the thing. In the afternoon we walked out to the Restaurant de la Cascade for tea. It is about two miles out in the Bois, by a very pretty little waterfall, nothing that we would have turned to look at in Norway, but attractive in the Bois.

In the evening we went to the movies, and saw two very good reels, also a Pathé weekly [newsreel]. Incidentally the Damrosch Finletter wedding was in one of the Pathé weekly reels, and if it comes to Philadelphia try to see it, as Grier is in it, I have been told.

This morning Kate and I went to the American Episcopalian Church, and heard a very fine sermon by the Bishop of Cleveland. I told him how much I had enjoyed it, as I shook hands with him at the door, in Auntie's best style. It was a delightful service. After lunch we decided to go up Montmartre and see the view of Paris. So we took the subway, and then the funicular up to the top. There was a service going on in the Sacré-Coeur church, which was crowded, full of incense, candles and humanity. We did not stay long inside, but wandered slowly down the hill, by crooked little streets and steep, winding roads. It must be a perfect paradise for Bohemians of all kinds, for the little sidewalk cafés and music halls were thick. As today was Sunday everyone was out walking through the middle of the streets, there are practically no sidewalks. We ended up by eating tea and bread and butter at a café called the Rat mort. The name upset Miss Clark a little, but did not affect her appetite. She has a New England conscience, which makes her go sight seeing regularly when she would much prefer to walk in the Bois.

I have never described the girl I am rooming with, so I am going to do it, so you will be able to picture her to yourself. She is just my height, brown hair, fuzzy like Carol Benson's, and a *great* deal of it, grey eyes, a Vassar graduate, has travelled around the world and considerably in Europe, was educated in the East, so does not have a Western accent, smokes (not much), and is a delightful companion.

With much love for all, Marian

Letter dated 24 August 1920

August 24th

I received your combined letter of Aug. 9th when I went to Morgan, Harjes yesterday morning, and I certainly was glad to get it and hear all of the home news. The mail service between France and the States does not seem to be very quick, but let us hope it will be sure.

Grier has been playing around with me most of the time I have been here. He leaves on the *La France* on Saturday, and I have finally received my orders, and leave for Blérancourt Tomorrow afternoon. This is where Anne [Farr] is stationed, and I am going to help her in the store part of the time. It sounds like a very nice job, and it will be fine to be with Anne, especially as she knows everything about the place, having been there a month. Kate Lewis is going there also, as a chauffeur, so we are going tomorrow on the 4.05 from the Gare du Nord. We have never seen Mrs. Dyke, as she has been over in London for a few days with Miss Morgan. But apparently we don't have to see her before going out.

This morning Miss Rockwell, Kate Lewis and I took our examinations for driver's licenses and all passed, with *félicitations* from the examiner. It was the hardest test I have ever been through, and N.J. doesn't know anything about Red Tape, compared to France. Fortunately I was able to hire a Dodge from the Agency here and it was *much* easier than taking the test in a Ford. It cost us 7.50 for an hour and a half, which we divided in thirds. The examiner had an errand he wanted to do, so he made me drive him from the Place de la Concorde up to the Boulevard des Italiens, two miles along it, around the Opera, and two miles back thro' the densest traffic I have ever imagined, After that test, I think I am qualified to drive under any conditions. He parted from me with many complimentary speeches, and asked who had taught me to drive. Then he only took the other two up to the Arc on the Champs Elysée!

After we had reported to the Committee and received our orders to go Tomorrow, we spent the afternoon shopping and getting R.R. tickets etc. Grier took lunch with me, and Aunt Kate took dinner here, and spent the evening. It has been awfully nice to have both of them in Paris while I have been here, and Grier has been sweet to me. I am going to miss him terribly when he leaves. Fortunately I seem to have a great many relations over here.

Last evening Grier and I took dinner with the Clapps at an Italian restaurant opposite the Opéra Comique and afterwards we went there and heard a very fine production of *Louise* [by Gustave Charpentier] It was very interesting seeing it after spending last Sunday on Montmartre. The seats cost 15 f. apiece on the 6th row, and the house was crowded. It is a great pity we can't give good cheap opera at home, and not make it quite such a dressy affair. Aunt Kate was there in a box with the Burgess family.

Yesterday it rained off and on all day, but this is almost the only bad weather we have had. We tried to go through the Louvre in the afternoon, but it was closed that day, so we wandered through the gardens of the Palais Royale instead, and bought some fur lined gloves at a very good little glove store there, for \$3.50. If they have good black kid ones, I will bring Auntie back some.

I am so glad you have rented the cottage for September, and Mrs. Wister ought to be a good tenant. I think \$250 is quite a good rent. I will think of you on the 31st and hope the moving will be a success. I know you will enjoy a few days at the Ritz. I wish while you are in town, you would both have a picture taken for me, passport size, without your hats, and mail them to me. George can show you the place.

With lots of love, Marian

Letter dated 25 August 1920

August 25th  
Blérancourt

I am writing this letter from a room in Mrs. Dyke's house where I am spending the night, as my regular room in the barracks won't be ready until tomorrow. We, Kate [Lewis] and I, came out by train this afternoon to Noyon, where we were met by Anne [Farr] and a chauffeur (another girl) and brought over here, about seven miles in the Committee's Dodge truck. I forgot to tell you that the Dodge we took our examination in was a truck! Anne was awfully glad to see me and took me to her room to wash up before dinner.

I cannot describe Blérancourt very well yet, as I have not really seen it, but the barracks where Anne lives are very nice. They are planned like this [Marian has drawn a small diagram here], six rooms, each with a French window, and a hall running along the back of them. There is no bathroom in ours, but there is one in the barracks alongside. Ours burned down and is being rebuilt. I am to have the room next to Anne's, as we each have a room to ourselves. The dining and living rooms are in a third building, but they are all very close together.

We had a very good dinner this evening, consisting of cream of corn soup, deviled eggs, cauliflower and baked potatoes, salad, and pancakes with butter and sugar. There is plenty of good country butter here, and Anne says the food is *very* good. I am going to be in charge of the store, and also be *marraine*

[godmother] of a village, so I think I will be quite busy. Ask George why our family are always picked for store keepers?

I will describe this place more in my next letter, when I have had time to look around a little. The only signs of devastation I have seen so far are the dead trees, and the shelled houses, but of course Blérancourt, while it was occupied by the Germans, was not razed to the ground, the way some of the other towns were.

This morning we took our trunks to the station and checked them, then got our hair washed. Grier took lunch with me, and said good-bye, and then we staired for the 4.05 train. We had to get there one hour ahead as we could not get any reserved seats in advance, it was the Paris, Brussels express and therefore crowded. Fortunately we got three seats in a 1st class compartment. Miss Shope came with us as far as Compiègne, where she changed and went to Vic [Vic-sur-Aisne, one of the Committee's regional centers]. I left my little trunk in Paris at the Cecelia, and brought my Innovation here.

Best love to all, Marian

Letter dated 28 August 1920

Blérancourt (Aisne)  
August 28th

I wrote to you last, the evening I arrived here, and was staying in Mrs. Dyke's house. By the way, I have not met her or Miss Morgan yet, but I believe they are coming here Tomorrow. Since then I have been so busy that I have not had time to write.

Thursday morning was store day. It is open two days a week, so Anne initiated me into the intricacies of running it. I have a three French women who do all of the selling over the counter, and, in true French style, I sit at the *caisse* [cash register] and take the money as they leave after they have made all of their purchases. The store is open from 9–12 and from 2–4.30, and after that I have to make up the accounts, or I can leave them till the next day, if I want to. I am entirely my own boss and can set my own working hours.

It is a good thing I can use the Corona [typewriter], as I have one here, also a desk in a room which I share with the *chef des automobiles*, at present a girl named Van Rensaelar. On Thursday morning I had to leave the store to Anne, and go out as chaperone with one of the chauffeurs who was delivering things in some of our villages. The girls are never allowed to go out in the cars alone, an excellent rule in this country, but we do not carry pistols any more. That seems to have been a war-time regulation.

The village of Blérancourt is in a plain, surrounded by small wooded hills, and only the fruit trees are destroyed. Also the fields are all planted, so the countryside looks green and part of the devastation is hidden by nature. Our *barracques* are in the courtyard of an old Château, which belonged to the Poitiers family, and was built in about 1400, and almost entirely destroyed by the Revolution. What little remained was badly shelled, so that now all that is left are the two gateways, and two side wings. I have taken some pictures, and will send them to you as soon as they are developed. The château had a moat around it, which is now dry.

Blérancourt is considered the choicest place to be stationed, as it is very well situated just on the edge of the town, and is the social head of the whole Committee, as Mrs. Dyke and Miss Morgan spend their

Sundays here, consequently, although Sunday is supposed to be a day of absolute rest, it is usually spent entertaining visitors, conveying them to and from the station etc. The village was terribly shelled by the Germans, and is largely in ruins, the Church and *Mairie* [town hall] are pitiful. A great many of the inhabitants have returned and are living in the ruins of their former houses which they are trying to repair and make habitable again. Window glass is very scarce, so they use a waxed, reinforced paper for all of the window, except one pane which is glass, so they can see out. The paper keeps the cold air out, but also the light.

Yesterday I spent trying to learn the French names for the things I have to sell. My French is improving hourly, as I sit between two French women at the table, and get splendid practice. I find that I know plenty to get along with in the store, and also in the villages. The directrice from Vic arrived to call this afternoon, bringing with her Miss Shope, who crossed with us. I am certainly glad Miss S. is not here with us, as she is perpetually gloomy. Kate Lewis has had a much harder time than I have had since she has been here, as I had Anne to show me everything, and she has had to learn from the other chauffeurs, who of course, were nothing like as nice to her as Anne was to me.

Driving and taking care of a Ford car is not easy at first. I have helped change two tires, and that is all I have had to do with a car since I have been here, except to be driven to various places. Whenever I want to go any place, I order a car and chauffeur, which amuses me greatly, as I can really drive better than most of them. I am feeling splendidly, the out-of-door life suits me perfectly, and since I have gotten accustomed to the coarse bread, my digestion equals an ostrich. The food here is *very* good. I got a letter from both of you yesterday dated on my birthday.

Affectionately, Marian

Letter dated 29 August 1920

Blérancourt  
Aug. 29th

This is your last Sunday at Bay Head, and I know you will be very busy during the next few days. I really feel as if I ought to be there to help. However you are probably getting on finely without me.

To-night the moon is full and the light on the ruins of the château is perfectly beautiful. It disguises the decay, and shows up the exquisite carving. Four of us, Anne and I, and two others have just returned from a four-mile walk in the moonlight, accompanied by the two police dogs. We have had an all day fête in Blérancourt, and the roads were full of peasants returning to their villages, some of them have walked six miles each way to come.

We started the day by having our breakfasts served in our rooms, at 8.30 instead of 8. This is a great treat especially to the chauffeurs. Also we had rolls, instead of bread, another treat, as the bread is not very good, due to the mixed flour which the Government makes the bakers use.

Blérancourt received a flag today from the head of the Union Nationale des Combattants, a society which corresponds to our American Legion. So at 11 o'clock we went in a body to the station where all of the inhabitants were, also a band, and received the official who brought the flag. He looked a little like the Kaiser, I thought, but seemed popular in spite of it. He presented the colors, and then everyone (except the Committee) went to a memorial mass at the church, which is mostly in ruins, consequently the people had to stand in the churchyard. We came back, and read and wrote letters until lunch time.

Then at 2.30 we went out to march in the procession, which was composed of about twenty Boy Scouts (recruited by an English scout master in the neighboring villages), the band, three large floral offerings, called *gerbes*, 1 of which was from the Comité, ten members of our group, and all of the men of the village who had fought in any war for France. It made quite a long procession.

We made a circle through the village and then went up to the cemetery. It was quite hard keeping step while marching over the roughly paved streets. The cemetery is on the outskirts of the village up a small hill, and the Comité has erected a monument there to the men who were killed in battle and died in prison. There were twenty-two killed and five prisoners who died from Blérancourt alone. The ceremony in the cemetery was very impressive, and tragic, for almost everyone there had lost someone in the war, and one old woman who stood near us had lost her three sons.

This part of France has suffered terribly. There was not a man present between the ages of 19 and 40. There were various speeches and singing before the flowers were placed on the monument, ending up with a twenty-minute sermon from the Curé, who saw a good opportunity, and then the children whose fathers had been killed came forward and each laid a few flowers on the base of the monument. There were about thirty of them, and there were very few in the audience who were not weeping by the time it was over. To look around at the old people and children, standing, pathetically looking at that monument to their dead, in the old grey walled cemetery, and to realize that the same kind of thing is going on all over this part of France, makes you feel that America should have come into the war sooner, before such terrific sacrifices were required of France.

On the other side of the wall is a small cemetery of German soldiers who were killed here, or died during the German occupation. It is quite neglected and the grass almost covers the wooden crosses with their German inscriptions, but really you could not expect the French to forget their wounds so soon, and take the same care of the German graves that they do of their own.

We were quite tired after the ceremony, as we had to stand for almost two hours, so we came back for tea, which Mrs. Dyke arrived for. I did not talk to her alone at all as I only saw her with the others, but she is just what I expected, looks rather like Mrs. Barclay Warburton, and makes a great effort to be agreeable. I got on very well with her.

After tea we went back to the village, and all rode on the merry-go-round. While we did it they took a movie of us, which we did not know about till later. We tried various other side shows, and then just as we were starting on a walk, a car arrived from Coucy-le-Château, with Miss Rockwell and Miss Clark in it, and two others. They had come to pay an official call, so Anne had to receive them. They were delighted with our quarters and general surroundings.

I have never described my room to you, so I will do it now. It is about 15 x 9, has a French window at one end. The walls are painted with the yellow wash we consider stylish at Springton [Springton Manor Farm, the Bartols' country home in Glen Moore, Pennsylvania]. In it I have a single iron bed, a small dressing stand, a table, two chairs, a small rug, and a wash stand, behind a partition, made of cretonne, which also forms a closet for my clothes. The cretonne, bed spread, curtains, table cover etc. is dark blue with small red roses in it, and I have bought a hardy red chrysanthemum plant for my table. I am going to cut some ivy to decorate still further, as soon as I can get some empty shells to use a vase. In my next letter I will describe the people here.

Affectionately, Marian



Letter dated 1 September 1920

September 1st

I got three letters from home this morning, one from Eleanor and two from Auntie, the last one dated the 17th, which is very quick mail service for France. They were very welcome, also the newspaper clippings. I am glad George got the house, as I knew he wanted it, and it can be made very attractive with fresh paper, paint and electric light [Marian's brother George had recently married Maisie Rush]. I wrote to you last on Sunday evening, so I will go on from there.

Monday was the day the store was open, so from 9 to 12 and 2 to 4.30 I made change in French and talked to the people as they went out. My French vocabulary is improving daily, as I have to talk it, and also learn hundreds of new words in connection with the store.

Today an automobile load full went over to Compiègne, by Mrs. Dyke's invitation, to visit the Boy Scout headquarters there. They took a picnic lunch and spent the day. I was going, but unfortunately a car load of things arrived for the store, so I had to stay here and spend the day supervising the unpacking etc. They go back around 4.30 and brought us a large mocha cake as a present for tea. This evening after dinner we took a walk. The days are getting perceptibly shorter now, and very soon it will be too dark to do it after dinner.

I'm going to describe the other members of our unit here, so that you will get a mental picture of the people I am working with. There are about ten of us, more or less, as Blérancourt, being the social center, has continuous visitors. The housekeeper, Mlle. Henneguy, is a typical, middle class old maid, she is thin, rather sallow, and very nice. She has very good food, and we pay our board of eighty francs a week to her. It is pretty cheap, about \$6.00. She also arranges for our laundry. All we have to do is to have our bundle in our room on Monday morning, and it is returned on Saturday, more or less injured by Javel water, but very white.

The Comtesse de la Battut is the next. She has charge of the library, also the very old people in the different villages. She is about 45, very charming and speaks the most beautiful French. She has curly brown hair and dresses in mourning, does not wear the uniform. On Sunday, in honor of the fête, she put on crêpe hat with a double pointed crêpe veil that came to within six in. of the ground. She is one of the old nobility, and a true blue.

The visiting nurse, Mlle. Dumons, is short, round and plump, with black eyes and hair and pink cheeks. I sit next to her at the table, and converse in French. She runs the village dispensary.

There are two girls in charge of the office, Smith and Tomlinson. Everyone is called by their last name here. Smith is the image of Ethel Clark Smith, in appearance, manner, and way of talking, but seems to be very nice. She is the treasurer. Tomlinson comes from Kansas City, but now lives at 1 Lexington Avenue, N.Y.! She is Anne's secretary and the office stenographer. She is short, always dieting to reduce, and then ruining the good effect by partaking heavily of patisserie and chocolate in between meals, because she is so hungry.

Then there is the Chef de Service and three chauffeurs. The Chef is Van Rensaelar, from N.Y. She is tall, dresses in the most awful old brown motor messenger uniform and is utterly without style, but very nice. I share an office with her. I am sorry to say she is leaving on Sunday, and an English girl is coming to take her place. The chauffeurs are Warren, Walton and Lewis. Warren is a typical Boston

girl, 21, very young, and not very cosmopolitan. I have gotten very fond of her. Walton comes from N.Y., but her mother was a Wetherill from Philadelphia. She and Warren both went to Bryn Mawr for a year. She is tall, looks a little like Georgina Biddle, but is nicer looking.

There is also a girl named [Agnes] Doran from Dallas, Texas. She is in charge of the physical culture of the children in our villages, and there certainly is need for it, as they are terribly underdeveloped due to lack of nourishment. She is like a breezy Westerner, and the other girls don't understand her at all. She crossed with Anne and Aunt Kate. She is nice if you know how to take her, but so very efficient, and shows that she knows it, so has a good deal of trouble with the others.

Then there is Prioleau, a queer looking girl of about 25, with blocked hair. She was born in France, and her parents were Americans, but had become naturalized British subjects, however she is rated as French on her passport. I don't know yet what she does.

Mr. Archiboeuf is a young French man who is an agricultural expert. He is in charge of the tractors, raising chickens, rabbits, etc. to supply the peasants. He is very middle class and rather stupid, but much impressed with a sense of his own importance.

The two people in charge of the moving pictures are also here, off and on. If any of the pictures are shown, be sure to go and see them, as most of them were taken here in Blérancourt, and I have been in two since I got here.

Blérancourt is a bigger center than most of the others, Coucy for instance has only six workers and there are more young people, consequently it is more fun, as we always have enough for a table of bridge. It is also said to be the faster one of the centers, gambling, smoking, drinking etc. more than any of the others, and also swearing. However Anne and I do not feel that we are being in any way injured by our associates. It certainly is nice having her here. Aunt Kate is coming over Sunday.

Affectionately, Marian

Letter dated 4-5 September 1920

Blérancourt  
September 4th

The letter which I sent to Greir at Havre was returned to me today, so I am enclosing it so that he can see I really wrote it. I wrote Aunt Neilly a long letter yesterday, describing our life here, etc. I finished describing the other members of our unit in my last letter, so I will now go on with the rest of the household.

Our cook, Mme. Quallet, is a little dried raisin of a woman, of about 45. She speaks very bad French, and cooks under very primitive conditions, very good food. The kitchen has a bare wooden floor, a stove with a hot water compartment in which the water for all of the dish washing is heated. The fuel is small pieces of wood. The sink is stone, and has a cold water spigot over it. It is in a dark corner. Of course there is no refrigerator, but we only get our supplies twice a week. The housekeeper goes to Compiègne, where there is a large market on Wednesdays and Saturdays. I don't know why the food does not spoil, as we haven't even a spring house to keep it in, but it doesn't. The milk is boiled as soon as it arrives, but the butter is always hard. The weather is much cooler than at home, and even now we are sleeping under three army blankets.

Our two waitress-chambermaids are named Suzanne and Madeleine. They are about 25, and typical peasant girls, with pink cheeks and curly black hair. Their costumes are unique, but at meal time they usually add a fancy gingham apron which covers a good deal of their dress. They take care of our rooms.

Then last but not least is Jeanne. She is my factotum in the store, and a jack-of-all-trades. She is about 28, and has been with the Committee for about two years, during which time she has absorbed everything that is bad in the American girls. She has bobbed her hair, which is black and stringy, learned to smoke, and struts around in imitation of our chauffeurs, who usually walk with their hands in their pockets, and stride. She wears long blue smocks, the color of our uniforms, a round white sailor's cap, army shoes, and spiral cloth puttees. She is as strong as a man, and moves the heaviest things in the store room with perfect ease. Finally she has a three year old son, born during the war. She says she has had a child for France, and that his father was killed at the front. Perhaps. I am giving her the benefit of the doubt. However she treats me with great respect, and always calls me "Mees Bartol."

Three dogs complete our happy family, two police dogs, one of about a year named Destroyer, and whom in Auntie's best style, I persistently call Defender, then a female wire haired fox terrier, named Peppy. She has three puppies of about six weeks, and is now much bored with them. She belongs to van Rensaelar, and rides everywhere with her in her car. And last there is Poilu, Anne's eight-months-old police dog, given to her by Bill Burgess. Grier can tell you all about him. Poilu is a perfect darling, and is devoted to both of us. My training, under Grandma, in raising puppies is very useful, as Anne does not know much on the subject, so I give full advice on his diet, exercise, and general treatment. I made him a pillow to sleep on, and stuffed it with soft hay, which he adores. I also bought a cake of disinfectant soap in Noyon to give him a bath, but we are waiting for a sunny day, which is a rare event as the weather is usually cloudy in this part of France. There are some fleas in our barracks, brought in by the dogs, I suppose, but they have not bothered me much so far. Vic also has fleas, but I have not heard about the other centers.

Sunday Sept. 5th

Last evening we had a movie in the Foyer of the Work of the American Committee in France, the pictures were taken in and around Blérancourt in 1918, and of course we recognized most of the buildings, people and some of the girls of the Committee. Needless to say the film was received with tremendous applause. Automobiles from Soissons, Vic, Anizy and Coucy [the Committee's four regional centers in addition to Blérancourt] came over to Blérancourt bringing about thirty people, about twenty of whom came for supper, so we had quite a hectic evening acting as hostesses.

Aunt Kate is coming this afternoon with Mrs. Dyke, to spend the night. The Committee is making every inducement to persuade her to spend the winter over here and take charge of the personnel, which included placing the people, in the centers which need them most, as they arrive. Mrs. Dyke says Aunt Kate is invaluable in that department. If it were not for Jocelyn, I think Aunt Kate would be tempted to stay, but she has promised Lucy to take charge of Jocelyn this winter in N.Y., so that she can take some courses at Columbia. Also I do not think Lucy feels well enough to have both Aunt Kate and Anne away from her. Therefore Anne is urging her grandmother to return. Katherine is now in Paris, and I expect to see her there when I get my first leave. Aunt Kate has moved out of K's apartment, to a small hotel nearby, as she had been occupying K's bedroom. Anne says that K is going ahead with her divorce [from Marcel], but I have not heard anything further about Mr. Ware [Katherine's beau]. Aunt Kate has never mentioned the subject to me.

Yesterday I went out to my village, St.-Paul-aux-Bois, to attend a wedding, for which I (as *marraine*), had received a formal invitation. The bride, Marie Therese Gérard, was marrying a young man from Lille, Joseph Maupin. He was the only young man in the church, as the rest were under 18, and over 45. It is really tragic, this complete destruction of the young men of France.

I arrived at the village so early (through fear of being late) that I had time to pay a call on an old couple who lived near the church. Their house had been made habitable, and they had some furniture and a stove loaned them by the Committee. Around the house were flower beds, full of asters and petunias, and at one side quite a large vegetable garden, beautifully kept, and full of vegetables. The old man was sorting onions, and I discussed the best kind of fertilizer for onions with him. Fortunately for me he spoke quite good French, as the patois is quite hard to understand.

Then I went up the hill to the church, which is as usual on a hill overlooking the village. The view over the valley was beautiful. The church was built in 1350, and is a fine example of the earliest Gothic architecture. It has the same arches, slightly flattened in the central rosette, as the St. Chapelle in Paris, and the ceiling is painted blue, with gold stars. It has been repaired by the Committee, and only lacks window panes, and a bell. I told the Curé to find out the approximate cost of these, and to let me know next week. The altar was decorated with yellow and white flowers, and in front of it were two chairs, with a tall taper beside each one for the bride and groom to sit in. There was a tiny organ in the center of the nave, and on one wall a list of the men who were killed during the war, written in gold ink on a piece of parchment. It was surrounded by a wreath of laurel leaves, tied with the tri-colored ribbon, and flanked on each side by a French flag, standing in two floor pedestals. Over it were two crossed bayonets.

I talked with the Curé for a few minutes, and then he seated me in a pew, about five from the front on the groom's side. This was fortunate, as I could watch the people in front of me, and follow whatever they did. The bridal procession arrived, heralded by many rifle shots, as is customary. They walked two and two, from the *Mairie*, where the civil marriage had been performed, first the bride, dressed in white, with a little tulle veil held in place with two tiny bunches of white flowers, and carrying a little prayer book. She walked with her father, who had on a frock coat, a pair of white cotton gloves, and a very large white boutonnière. He wept, into a large handkerchief, during a large part of the ceremony.

Then came the groom and the bride's mother, a little flower girl and all the rest of the families and friends, about 45 in all. The service lasted about an hour and a half, and was in Latin, with the exception of a short sermon, addressed to the bride and groom, in which the Curé urged them to do their duty to France and give her men to be her future soldiers. At the end a choir, composed of six of the bride's friends, and the four little acolytes, who were dressed in red gowns with white lace surplices, chanted a nuptial hymn, while it was going on all of us went in single file up to the altar and put an offering on the plate which was held by the Curé.

During the ceremony almost everyone was so overcome by their emotions that they wept. After it was over the bride and groom went out into the sacristy to sign the register, and as they passed me, stopped, and in front of the entire congregation, thanked me for the honor I had done them in coming, and urged me to stay for the breakfast. I pleaded urgent business at Blérancourt, and in my most polite French (acquired from Mlle de la Battut) congratulated them both, and told them that I would bring a case of cooking utensils and china, as a present from the Committee the next time I came to St. Paul. The bride's parents then thanked me, and I left after mutual good wishes.

It was a very interesting experience. The Americans are almost worshiped in this part of France, and I cannot understand how the impression has become so widespread in America that we are unwelcome, and that there is not enough food for any outsiders. It is quite the reverse, and I think it is German propaganda which is responsible for the report.

I have just received a letter from Eleanor, of Aug. 20th, and am returning the Fidelity's receipt to them. They always deposit Auntie's check in the Girard National directly, and do not send it to her. I thought I had explained that. The rest of us get the checks. Ask George to take out travelers insurance on my trunks until I get back, with the N.A. and to value the contents at \$1000. I forgot to do it before I left, and as this place has had a fire, in which four of the girls lost everything in June, I think it safer to insure mine. Eleanor can give him a check for the amount of the insurance. Have not rec'd Maisie's [her sister-in-law, Maisie Rush Bartol] letter yet.

M. G. B.

Letter dated 9 September 1920

Blérancourt

Sept. 9th

I received letters from both of you, dated Aug. 23rd and 25th yesterday, and was as usual delighted to get them. I think you are very wise to go to the B-S and keep Bobs with you. I know he will be happier there than anywhere else. I had heard about the proposed settlement of Uncle Henry's estate from Anne, thro' Aunt Kate, but did not believe they had understood it correctly, as it seems to me like a very poor arrangement. Evidently the agreement is, as Grier feared, illegal. I don't think much of Mr. Saul, if this is the best he can do. In any case I hope Aunt Kate gets the money that is due her (the \$2000. a year from the time of Uncle H's death until now). It should be about 3000. I think.

On Monday I broke a little piece off of one of my back teeth, alongside of a filling. I suppose I must have bitten on something hard, but cannot remember doing so. Consequently I was afraid to wait to get it fixed, for fear it might begin to hurt, so got permission to go up to Paris to see a dentist. I got the name of an American one from Walton and took the 6.05 p.m. from Noyon, after I finished with the store. The train was a little late, so I didn't get to the Petrograd, where I spent the night, until 8.10, by which time the dining room was closed. I had to go out and hunt up a restaurant to get some dinner. Fortunately I found a small one on the Boulevard Haussmann, about two blocks from the hotel, called Topsy's, where I got an excellent table d'hôte dinner for 13 francs. You would have been much amused to have seen me, dressed in uniform, sitting at a small table at a sidewalk café, at 9 o'clock at night. The next morning I went to the Galleries Lafayette and bought some union suits of wool and silk, also various other small purchases. Then I went to the dentist, who was very conveniently near on the Boulevard Haussmann. He put in a cement filling in about twenty minutes.

I took lunch with Katherine, Aunt Kate and Henri at K's apartment, and as I got there beforehand, I had a very nice talk with Katherine before the others arrived. Katherine is so afraid of not getting anything from her father's estate that she is willing to accept almost any arrangement that the Franklin Institute will offer. She is at rock bottom financially, and exhausted with it. I also think she is very unhappy. While I was there Mr. Ware phoned to invite her out to lunch the next day. She seemed delighted to see me, and gave me a very warm welcome. It will be very nice having her apartment as a headquarters after Aunt Kate sails for home on Oct. 6th.

This is a sketch of the railroads. [Marian has inserted a sketch here.] Noyon is on the main line between Paris and Brussels, and Blérancourt is on a branch road, which runs between Appilly and Coucy-le-Château, where Miss Rockwell is stationed. We are usually met at Noyon, but if there is no car there, we go on to Appilly, then take the local directly to Blérancourt. The branch line has two passenger trains each way daily, and they go quite close to our Château grounds. It reminds me of the D. & L.

Two of our chauffeurs left on Sunday, as their six months were up, Warren, the Boston girl, and Van Rensaelar, our Chef de Service. They have been replaced by two English girls. The Chef who is in the office with me is named Dewhurst. She is small, thin and quite pretty, and was the head of an English Ambulance Corps of forty cars during the war. She is a fine *mechanicien*, and very capable. The other is named Maynard. She is large, rather masculine looking, and awfully funny. Their English accent is so contagious that I am afraid I may catch it, being so much in the same office.

I attended another wedding on Wednesday with Mlle. de la Battut and Mlle. HenneGuy. It was the daughter of the proprietor of the sugar factory in Blérancourt and took place in the village church. When the factory opens, I am going through it. I think the reason I am sent to represent the Committee at weddings is because I always have clean white gloves, which are essential.

I know you were glad that I was away when the two people had to be rescued in front of our house.

Affectionately, M.G.B.

Letter dated 12 September 1920

September 12th

I got an American mail this morning, a fine long letter from Auntie, enclosing one from Aunt Sita and another from Aunt Ellen, I also got letters from Mary Smith, and Gay. Has anything happened to Helen Semple or her mother? I have not heard anything from her since two weeks before I left Bay Head. I wish you would try to find out if either of them are ill.

We have had a very busy week and with company, as usual. Katherine and Henri came out yesterday afternoon, and spent the night, and this morning Didier stopped off on his way from Rethel to Lyons. He spent the day, and they all returned to Paris on the afternoon train. Kate Lewis drove them over to the train and by bad luck had two punctures between here and Noyon, so they just made the train although they had allowed about an hour so as to reach the station in plenty of time. After they left, I went over to Coucy with Maynard to get Aunt Kate, who had been spending a night there. She will be with us tonight, returning to Paris tomorrow. Then this evening two friends of Mrs. Dyke's came for supper, a Mr. Whitwell, of Boston, and Mrs. W's cousin, an English girl. Mr. W. knows Dr. Edward Bartol very well, and was delighted to meet me.

After they all left Aunt Kate, Anne and I, and of course Poilu, had a nice talk by the open fire in the living room. The weather today has been heavenly, the air is crisp, much like the Springton air in September, and there is a long line of green hills which you can see from the church, which is so like the Welch mountain, that I frequently climb the hill to look at the view.

On Friday I went out to St.-Paul-aux-Bois to pay visits as *marraine* of the village. As you know it was my first experience in anything of this sort, but I enjoyed it immensely, and got on "quite alright" as the English girls here say. I first paid a call on the school teacher, then on the Curé and his sister, and then

on four other families. I also delivered the case of cooking utensils to the bride, whose wedding I had attended. They were delighted to see me, told me in detail about the wedding breakfast, where 36 had been seated at a long table in the garden. They also brought out some wine and biscuits, of which I ate as little as possible. Some of the old people are very pathetic. They were all in Belgium for about two years, as civilian prisoners of the Germans, and their stories are really tragic. But they all agree that without the packages of food sent over from America, and distributed through Mr. Hoover, they would all have died of starvation. As it was they received a package every ten days, but the Germans usually removed the coffee, substituting ersatz made of acorns, and the white flour, putting something else in its place.

With best love to all,  
Affectionately, Marian

Letter dated 16 September 1920

Blérancourt  
September 16th

Eleanor's letter of the 1st from the Bellevue reached me yesterday, which is the shortest time for one of your letters so far. I think it must have come over on the *La France*, which is the boat Aunt Kate expects to sail for home on, on Sept. 25th. I intended to write to you last evening, but I was so sleepy after an all day's trip to Compiègne, that I decided to do it this morning before breakfast.

I am really *very* busy here, and love the work. I am trying to follow your advice and not do too much, and usually stop every day at tea time, but yesterday a camion arrived from Paris at 6 p.m., and I had to superintend the unloading, counting and have all the things put in the store house for the night. Anne says the life here is much like college, without the concentrated brain effort. It seems to agree with all of us, as we feel splendidly, have fine appetites, and take setting-up exercises or long walks every day. The air at night is so cold, and it is so quiet here, that we sleep wonderfully.

On Monday after tea Anne and I decided we needed a picnic, so we took Poilu, some food (bacon, eggs, tomatoes) etc. cheese and a fruit pie, and walked to a plateau about two miles away near Blérancourdelle. It was like a Scotch moor, and had been hotly fought over during the war, and the ground was covered with crevasses, where the earth had caved in; there were some natural caves in the rocks, which had evidently been used as dug-outs, as old pieces of camouflage, canteens, shell baskets etc. were lying around. We were so high up that we had a fine view in all directions. We made a fire place with some stones, and soon had a hot little fire going, on which we cooked bacon, fried tomatoes and scrambled eggs. The food tasted deliciously, and just after the sun set a large rabbit came out of his hole to investigate us. Poilu kept perfectly quiet, and the rabbit came almost up to us before he scented the dog, then he ran off *à grande vitesse* [at top speed].

At dusk we heard the men from Blérancourdelle returning by a wood's road from their farm work, so we decided it was getting dark, and started for home. The farmers here work from sunrise until it is too dark to see any longer, there is no eight hour day in the devastated regions. As we were coming home we heard the distant whistle of the train at Blérancourt, which gave a very incongruous note in the intense quiet of the woods. We played bridge that evening and then made fudge, and just as Anne and I were starting to undress at about 11.45, we heard a car come into the grounds, so went out to investigate. It was an English officer who was on his way back from Amiens, who had gotten lost, as his lights had gone out, and he had driven for miles by the light of a lantern, held by his orderly. There

is no hotel in Blérancourt, so we gave him the guest room. The excitement and surprise to all the others, when he appeared at breakfast the next morning, was great, and quite repaid us for our work.

Nothing of interest happened on Tuesday, but yesterday I had a very interesting day.

We went to Compiègne to do some shopping for the *magasin*, and in the afternoon went to the final exercises of the Boy Scouts camp at Francport, the place where the armistice was signed. It is in the forest of Compiègne.

We, Tomlinson, Heitkamp, Dewhurst and I, started in the Dodge at 9:30. The road to Compiègne was one of the most fought-over pieces of ground during the war. One of the villages, Tracy le Val, was captured and recaptured seventeen times. Of course nothing remains but a heap of ruins, and all along the road, the entire way, about seventeen miles, were dead fruit trees, which had been cut in a circle about a foot above the ground, and were still standing, dead and ghostly looking—such an example of the unnecessary and wanton destruction which the Germans did whenever they had time. The fields are being cultivated again, wherever it is possible, and by the side of the road were great heaps of barbed wire, chevaux-de-frise, helmets, shells, shell baskets, canteens, etc., which have been collected in the fields, and which will be hauled away by the Préfecture. Compiègne itself was not damaged at all, as the Germans were not there long enough. There is a wonderful château there, but I did not have time to see it.

I bought a sewing machine, a cradle, an armchair for an invalid child, and various other small things. Then, after making some necessary purchases at the patisserie shop we drove through the forest to the Aisne and ate a picnic lunch on the river bank. It was a lovely, mild day, and we had a fine time. Then we went on to the Boy Scouts' camp, which has been run by the American Committee for two months. The Scouts are a new idea in France, and very popular. It was the final day before the camp disbands, and Miss Morgan, Mrs. Dike, three Scout Commissioners—one English, one Irish, and one American—were there, as well as the Bishop of Meaux, about twenty of the Committee from the various centers, and many friends of the Scouts.

The camp is situated on a plain at the edge of the forest, quite near the river Aisne, an ideal place. The scouts did all of their various drills and games, and then we had speeches from M. André Tardieu, General Pétain, the Minister of the Regions Devastées, and the Bishop of Meaux. The Bishop has evidently been very active in the army during the war, and his costume was quite remarkable. He had on an overseas cap, made of black, with a silver cross on the left side, a long black soutane, which he had tucked up at the waist by his black silk cord belt, and on his feet riding boots and spurs. He was wearing about five decorations and had a long brown beard. Altogether he was a very striking figure.

M. Tardieu looked very much like an American, and made an excellent speech. The English commissioner, Mr. Greenhill, was most amusing. He came and sat between Tomlinson and me, and entertained us the whole time we were there. The drive back through the forest was lovely. The woods were carpeted with tall ferns, and all the brushwood had been cut away, so that the sunlight filtered through the beech trees, and danced on the ferns and heather. We got back just in time for tea, and brought with us a large cake with coffee icing as a present to Anne.

I am so glad you got moved up from Bay Head so successfully.

Affectionately, Marian



Letter dated 20 September 1920

September 20th

I did not get my usual letter written last evening, due to a series of unexpected events which I will explain later on. So I am taking advantage of a lull in business in the *magasin* this afternoon to write.

On Sunday afternoon a woman came in from my village of St. Paul to ask if I would be god-mother for her baby, who was to be christened on Sunday. I agreed, and then Anne asked me if I wanted to go out to St. Paul and leave some gifts of clothing for some old people. So I got in the car with her, took the clothes, and she dropped me and Peppy, the fox-terrier, there, and we walked home.

While there, I discovered that the baby was an illegitimate child, as the woman's husband had been killed in the war four years ago. This news was rather disconcerting, so I paid a call on the Curé to see if it was expedient for a member of the American Committee to officiate in such a case. He listened carefully, and finally said, "Of course a case like this is most unfortunate, but France needs the babies, so while the Church deploras it, the State is much pleased. However we can arrange the matter, and as you are not a Catholic, I will have one stand by you, and take the vows for you!" I was quite taken aback, as I found that the illegitimacy of the child did no worry him at all, but my being a Protestant did!

Saturday evening Aunt Kate came out to spend the night. This is the last time she will come, as she sails on Saturday, and Mrs. Tracy takes her place. Anne went back to Paris with her to take her three days' permission. She will be away until Wednesday and has left Poilu in my charge. He sleeps in my room, and seems quite contented to be with me instead of Anne.

The wrist watch, which I had repaired at Riggs, arrived yesterday, in good condition, and I am wearing it now. It is so nice to have a luminous-faced one. I am sending George's back by Aunt Kate, and she will mail it when she gets to New York. I got a letter from Auntie yesterday from the Bellevue, saying you had sent my fur coat. I am delighted, as I think I shall need it very much when I go into Paris on Saturday for my permission. I will arrange with the American Express Co. about it.

The weather continues fine, very little rain, but the nights are *very* cold, and I am sleeping under four blankets. When it turns colder I will add my flannel nightgown and my steamer rug.

On Sunday morning, just after I had finished breakfast, Miss Morgan arrived, and sent word she wanted to meet me. So I added a few finishing touches to my uniform and went out to see her. She is *very* nice, about 48 or 50 years of age, with grayish curly hair, tall, deep-voiced, and quite striking looking. She was dressed in our uniform, but because it was Sunday, I suppose, she had put on a blue and silver silk sweater instead of the coat, and a rope of pearls which fell almost to her waist. She is an entirely different type from Mrs. Dike, but they are very intimate.

She spent the day at Coucy, but came back here for dinner, so I sat next to her and had a most amusing time, as she discussed French politics with Mlle. de la Battut and me in the most rapid French I have every heard. I was quite pushed mentally to keep up with them.

Just as I was starting for the christening, Kate Lewis, who was taking me, could not start her car. After waiting 1/2 hour, I decided to walk, as it was only 3 1/2 miles. I arrived over an hour late, but explained matters, and the christening came of most successfully. The baby was named Isabelle Hélène Marie

(the last for me) and after the ceremony was over, I went to the house where I had to drink a glass of wine and eat a small piece of cake. I suppose I will have to buy the baby a present when I am in Paris.

As I started for home, I found Kate broken down again in the middle of the village. She had followed me to drive me home. After we worked over the car for 1 1/2 hours, I walked back to Blérancourt, and sent out a rescue car. My feet were quite tired after the seven miles, but today I am entirely rested. Tell Grier he was right about Kate being a poor driver. She is like Algernon, and lacks judgment.

With love for all, Marian

Letter dated 22 September 1920

September 22nd

Eleanor's letter written on Labor Day arrived this morning, and I was delighted to get it. I knew Bobs would be a good dog at the Bellevue. He always rises to the occasion. I suppose Dixie is quite silent now, as he is molting.

I understand that another dog is coming to Blérancourt. That will make eight, almost as many dogs as people, someone from Soissons told us the other day. Peppy, Dewhurst's little dog, is really a dear. She comes to my room every morning, as soon as she is awake, and stays with me while I am dressing. Poilu is rather jealous of her, and won't let her get on his cushion. Then when I am dressed, they both follow me to breakfast. Anne is coming back Tomorrow morning, so Poilu will then return to her room to sleep. He is really very good at night, but not quite as quiet as Peppy or Bobs.

Yesterday afternoon after tea Dewhurst and I took a walk with the dogs to the top of a hill, above Blérancourdelle, and sat down in front of some woods to watch the sunset. The dogs dug for field mice, and paid no attention to the view, which was really beautiful, little villages, with roofs of all the pastel shades, dotted all over the valley, lots of woods, and ploughed ground, which is being prepared for wheat.

They are just taking up the potatoes here now, and the smell of the earth reminds me of Springton. I hope we have a good crop this year. They are very good over here. I think you are very wise not to stay in the country late this year, and I will begin now to send my letters to 1932 [Locust Street, Philadelphia] instead of Glen Moore. I hope this one will cross on the *La France* on Saturday.

Mrs. Wilson, about whom you asked, is being allowed to resign gracefully. She will not come back with the Committee. Aunt Kate told me this. She also told me that I have made very good already, which is good news, as I won't be transferred to any other center, if I have made good here, and Blérancourt is certainly the nicest center to be in.

I am finding the work more and more interesting, and unless you need me at home, I would very much like to stay over the six months. I have been here exactly four weeks today, and just now have learned everything about my work. Also I am getting to know the people in St. Paul. I won't decide definitely how long I will stay, but if you need me, let me know.

How would you like to both come over and spend a couple of months on the Riviera, and then we could all go home together? It would be wonderful there the end of February and in March. Think it over and let me know; but if George, Maisie and Grier are all well then, and you can get away, it would

be a fine trip. I think Norway is a little near Russia to be a good place for tourists yet. We had better wait another year to go there and finish our pre-war trip. Tell Mary Smith to come over with you. Four make a better number for traveling than three.

Yesterday two large camions full of things for the store arrived, and I spent most of the day superintending the unpacking and putting away. In the afternoon a Frenchman and his wife came in to ask if we would lend them one of our *mechaniciens* to help repair their automobile spring. They were former inhabitants of Blérancourt and had come down from Paris in their car to inspect what was left of their property. Dewhurst got me to help her talk to them, as her French is rather limited to automobile terms, and we arranged to send them a man after hours. He got them fixed up, and they were so grateful that they came back today bringing us each a large bunch of beautiful roses. There were two snails on one of the rose leaves, a big snail, striped black and white, and a baby one, with tiny horns.

They asked us to come and see what had been their home, so we went at six this evening. All that is left of the house is one corner, and the iron water tank. The rest was destroyed in the bombardment. They were evidently wealthy people, as it was a large property. There was a garden of about two acres behind the house, enclosed with a high gray stone wall, on which over two hundred fruit trees had been trained to grow. *Not one* was left, as the Germans wantonly destroyed every one. The little boxwood hedges were all that remained to show where the paths had formerly been. The rest had all gone back to wilderness, and out of the tangle you could see in one place asparagus plants, gooseberry and currant bushes, quite dead, peonies and rosebushes struggling through the weeds and trying to bloom.

The owners had moved all of their most valuable belongings here from Paris the year before the war, consequently had lost everything they owned in the way of furniture, linen, silver, etc. It was one of the best examples of the aftermath of war that I have ever seen, and so tragic because it seems so unnecessary. The owners seem so despairing of ever being able to restore the place to its former state that I doubt if they will try. It is very difficult to get workmen in the country, as they are all crowding into the factories in the cities, just the way they are doing in America. This place that I have described to you is typical of hundreds in the Devastated Regions.

We have not had any frost here yet, and our flowers are blooming splendidly. The fall over here is one of their best seasons, I understand, and so far we have had marvelous weather. The moon is half full now and makes the château more beautiful at night than it is even in the daytime.

Give my love to everyone. I am so glad Grier got back in time to see Kingsley.

Affectionately, Marian

Letter dated 26 September 1920

Paris, Sept. 26th  
Hotel Oxford & Cambridge

I am up in Paris for three days *en permission* with Kate Lewis, and it certainly is nice to be in a big city again, although Blérancourt has become so much like home now that I almost miss it when I leave. We took the 6:08 p.m. from Noyon yesterday afternoon and arrived at the Cecilia about eight, as our train was late. When we got there we found that we could only keep our room until Monday morning, so we decided to move after lunch today, as that would give us more time tomorrow. I got the manager to engage us a room over the phone, and after calling up five hotels, he finally got us a very good room

here. We are on the corner, facing east on the second floor.

This hotel is largely patronized by English people, as you can tell by its name, and is quite old-fashioned, but very good. It is on the corner of the Rue St. Honoré and the Rue d'Alger, one block from the Place Vendôme. So you see it is much more centrally located than the Cecilia, and will be more convenient to do our errands from. We are not living *en pension* this time, as we want to eat at different restaurants and sample the Parisian food. Tomorrow Katherine is going to lunch with me at the Marguery, and afterwards buy an everyday black hat for me. I do not trust my own taste in selecting hats, and as Auntie is not here, I am taking K. as a substitute.

Also I am going to have my blue-green coat (from Dawes) interlined to the waist and in the sleeves, and probably add a fur collar and cuffs, to make it warm enough for winter. We have not had any cold weather yet, or even frost, but I think we will get it later on.

I have never received the letter you said Maisie had written me. Where did she address it to?

I came up to Paris in civilian clothes, and it seemed quite queer to be out of uniform. It is so easy to put on the same thing every day, and never have to decide what to wear, which is always a problem for me. It is like being in mourning.

I cannot remember when I last wrote to you, but think it was on Thursday evening. On Friday a Mrs. Ray and her daughter, from Pittsburgh, came out from Paris in Miss Morgan's car and took lunch with us. We were told in advance to put our best foot forward, so we had a very good lunch, and I was put by Mrs. Ray at the table to entertain her. This was considered a great honor. They were awfully nice people, and much interested. In fact, when they left Miss Ray said she would like to return as a worker, but did not feel she had enough training! I was delighted that we had made such a favorable impression of our abilities.

I don't know whether I have ever described what makes up the *personelle* of one of the Committee's centers. It consists of a Directrice; if it is a large center it also has a sous-Directrice; the Store-keeper, who is officially known as the Directrice du Magasin; and the Chef de Service. These two rank together, and next to the Directrice. Then there is a secretary, who also does all the typing; a cashier, who is usually paid, as no volunteer wants the job; two, three, or four chauffeurs, according to the importance of the center; we have four, but we are the largest one; a visiting nurse; a physical director, for the children; a French woman of good birth, who has been trained in social service, and who visits the old and sick in the different villages; and the housekeeper. Some of the centers have only six workers altogether and others have sixteen or more. As Blérancourt has a large repair shop for automobiles, we also have three large camions, with French men drivers, who go back and forth from Paris, bringing out all the supplies for the cars, stores, etc., in all the centers.

This morning I went to the morning service at the American church, and this afternoon we spent in the Tuileries gardens and then took tea at Marquis's Tea Shop. Tomorrow morning I am going to the bank, to report to the Committee, and get my permanent *carte d'identité* and *permis de conduire*, before I lunch with Katherine.

Affectionately, Marian

Letter dated 28 September 1920

Paris, September 28th

I have had a fine time for the last two days in Paris, and am enjoying every minute of it. I have not eaten two meals in the same place, and the variety of food is very welcome after a month in Blérancourt, where, of course, there is a certain sameness in the menu, although the food is splendid, and served very hot, which would suit Auntie.

Sunday evening Kate and I went to Prunier's a restaurant like Bookbinder's at home, which specializes in lobsters. It was only a block from this hotel, and we got a very good dinner there. The place was crowded with middle class families eating their Sunday evening meal out, probably in the absence of their maid of all work.

Monday morning I spent shopping and went to the bank. Tell George, if he has not already done so, to buy \$500. worth of francs and place it to my credit at Morgan Harjes. I still have a balance of 9000. f., but don't want it to get low, as from time to time I have to buy clothes, as well as use it for my living expenses, and I want to keep my \$500. in American Express Co. checks as a reserve.

I had invited Katherine and Henri to lunch with me at the Marguery, so met them there at 12:30, the fashionable lunch hour. It has not changed a bit since I was there last with Grandma and Mr. Crozer. We had the famous sole, with French peas, cooked with lettuce, Brie cheese, café parfait, and coffee.

Afterwards Katherine went with me and I bought a hat. It is almost the color of my Canadian fur, and made of feathers, and singularly becoming. We both decided it went so well with the fur that it would be a mistake to put any other fur on the coat, so I took it to K's dressmaker and had it interlined with wool flannel. I have now discarded both of my straw hats and am all fitted out until I come home, except for some dresses. I have shortened three of my dresses, about 3 inches each, on K's advice, and now look quite Parisian.

Last night we took dinner in K's apartment, and played bridge afterwards. It is really very nice to have a member of my family settled here, and to know that if I needed any help, I have only to telephone her.

This morning I got my hair washed, and then met K. at the Chinese Umbrella, a tea shop where I had heard they served corn bread. We lunched on fried chicken, sweet potatoes and corn bread.

This afternoon Kate and I went to a fortune teller's whom all of the American Committee consult when they come to Paris. He has an office over a tea shop, near the Madeleine, and does a thriving business, I think. He was very clever, and excellent at reading character, as they all are. Also he made some very good guesses about things that had happened in the past. The future he predicted remains to be seen. I wish Mary Smith had been there with me, to see if he would have told her the same things.

This evening I am taking dinner at Katherine's, and afterwards I have three tickets for the Comédie Française. I have never been there, and Grier told me it was part of one's education to go. I miss having him here in Paris with me this time, but I have been very lucky in knowing people here each time I have been in. On my next time off, I am coming in with Tomlinson, the New York girl, and as she knows a lot of people at the American Embassy, we should enjoy ourselves.

I am going back to Blérancourt right after lunch tomorrow. Mrs. Tracy, who has come over to replace Aunt Kate, is in charge of the *personnelle* now. I have already been notified, unofficially, that my work with the committee is highly satisfactory, which is very nice to know at the end of the first month.

France is very much excited over M. [Alexandre] Millerand's election, and everyone is much pleased. They ask us, "why doesn't Mr. Wilson resign, too?" He has just the same illness as [Paul] Deschanel!" This is hard to explain. I personally think he ought to.

With lots of love to everyone, Marian

Letter dated 1 October 1920

Blérancourt  
October 1st

I have lost the sequence of pages due to my trip to Paris, but I think it is 66. We came back on Wednesday afternoon, and brought a chocolate cake as a present to the rest. Tommy and Dewhurst met us at the station, and spent the trip over telling us of the different accidents which had happened in our absence. It was really quite awful.

The first one was at Pont St. Mard, one of our villages. A large truck, loaded with gravel and barbed wire, was coming down a steep hill, when the steering wheel and the emergency brake both broke. The truck ran away, and killed three of the men in it, injuring the other six terribly. We had to send a car out to bring them in to the Blérancourt hospital.

The next day Prioleau, who has now decided she wants to be a chauffeur, went out to make some deliveries from the *magasin*, and on her way back, on a perfectly straight piece of road, ran the car into the only very deep ditch in miles. Of course the car turned on its side, knocking her unconscious, and hurling the dog, Destroyer, through the windshield. He got a terrible cut from the glass, on one shoulder, so had to be taken to the vet at Chauny. He sewed it up with five stitches, which Destroyer took out that evening. We are going to take him back to the vet tomorrow. Why Prioleau was not killed is a mystery, but aside from the shock she is alright.

The third and last accident was an explosion in our atelier, caused by one of the men using what he thought was an empty gasoline can as a table for his soldering outfit. The can had six inches of gas in it, which promptly exploded. Fortunately no one was badly hurt.

The last night I was in Paris I went to the Comédie Française with Katherine and Henri to see a very good play, *Le Prince d'Aurec*, by Henri Lavedan. Two of the most famous people in Paris were in the cast, Cécile Sorel, who is the leading demi-monde, and [Edouard] de Max, who has the reputation of being the greatest libertine, so you can see that it was a noteworthy performance. I enjoyed it immensely, as I had never been to that theatre before, and the French was a treat to listen to.

On Wednesday morning I wandered along both banks of the Seine, and all over the Isle du Cité [sic]. I had intended climbing the tower of Notre Dame but a large funeral was going on, and the crowd was too dense. I nearly bought two tiny gray birds with red beaks at one of the various pet shops, but decided my room was not a suitable place for them, as the temperature varies too much.

Today I went over to Laon, to take the money from the Préfecture sales in the shop to the Préfecture of the Aisne, which has its headquarters in Laon. I rather welcomed the chance, as I don't get away from Blérancourt ordinarily. Dewhurst took me over in the Dodge, and we took lunch at the Committee's house in Laon. We had a fine day, and after we got through at the Préfecture went through the

Cathedral, and then wandered around the town until lunch time. Loan was in the German lines for over four years, so was not bombarded. It is on the top of a very high hill, and was a wonderful strategic point.

On the way over we went through Coucy and Anizy, both of which, and all the surrounding country, are entirely destroyed.

Affectionately, Marian

Letter dated 3 October 1920

October 3rd

I have had quantities of letters in the last two days, one from Auntie, two from Eleanor, enclosing some blank checks, and the clipping about the Wall Street explosion. It must have been appalling. The French papers have been full of it, but of course this account is far better.

I am sorry George did not buy francs for me at the time I wrote him to, as the rate of exchange is not as good now. However I want him to do it *now*, as I wrote in my last letter. I will probably need the money while I am in France, and I want to keep my Express checks as an emergency fund.

I got a long letter from Aunt Neilly, also one from Aunt Ellen, asking for a full description of my work. So I have just written her eight pages, describing the life, work, recreation, etc. Aunt N's letter sounded lonely and depressed. What a horrible accident Elizabeth Black had. I can only think the boys in the party had had too much to drink. I hope she is well on the road to recovery by now. Poor Kingsley will have a sad home-coming, with her sister in the hospital. I am glad she finally met Grier. I am perfectly delighted to hear the news about Maisie. She has not written it to me yet, so I will wait till I get her letter before I write to her. I think the next time I go up to Paris I had better buy her the French negligee I promised her and send it home c/o American Express Co. or by registered mail, as she will need it this winter before I get home. It is so hard to send things from France that I am not sure whether I will be able to send you any Christmas presents or not, but if I can't, I will bring them when I come. Of course you will not be able to come over and join me, as I suggested, so I will arrange to come back with Anne. I think we will try to sail from Italy, as it will be both a warmer and a smoother crossing than from the north. I don't know yet when we will come, as we are waiting to see how we like the cold weather over here, etc., but we would both like to stay out our six months. If you want me sooner, *do cable*, as you promised you would. I wish you would both take a trip to New O. as you can't come over here. With Grier and me away, you could easily close up for a few weeks. I know Mary Smith is glad to have you at Springton for a few weeks as it is so lonely for her at Joanna this summer.

We are having a big children's fête at Blérancourt this afternoon. About 350 children from the surrounding villages are coming to give an exhibition of the physical drills etc. Doran has taught them. I am in charge of the refreshments with Smith and Mlle. Henneguy, so we will have a busy time. They consist of hot chocolate and cakes. The exhibition will take place on the Blérancourt "*place*," and we have decorated it with flags and bunting. Also we have enclosed it by stretching a wire around it. This we soon saw was a mistake, as no one saw the wire, and walked or rode their bicycles directly into it, so we had to hang little strips of muslin at about twenty-foot intervals. They flutter in the wind like little scarecrows.

Miss Morgan and Mrs. Dike have come down to spend Sunday, and all of the people from the other

centers are coming, so we will have a huge crowd. Fortunately the weather is rather clear, although quite cloudy. Maynard, one of our English chauffeurs, keeps a barometer in her room, which she consults constantly and tells us the result at mealtimes. Unluckily the glass has been dropping for three days, so she is most pessimistic. It reminds me so much of Father. You remember how he was always looking at our barometer. I think it must have been his English blood.

I will write again Tomorrow evening and describe the fête in detail. I am enclosing a copy of description of my store which I wrote for the weekly bulletin, also an impression of our seal.

Affectionately, Marian

Letter dated 6 October 1920

October 6th

I intended to write sooner and describe the fête on Sunday, but I have been so busy. I have not had time until Today. I got your letters of September 20th and 24th this morning, also one from Mary Smith. They were most welcome, also all the home news. The silo filling certainly was late this year. We usually are all through by the 25th, instead of just starting. There are no silos in France, as there is no field corn. The cows are fed hay of all types and concentrated feed. The few cows there are in this province are the ones the Germans have sent back, and they are a miserable lot of tubercular looking Herefords and Durhams, not a good milk cow in the lot.

I am rather sorry that I am not able to do any agricultural work with the committee. Apparently there is none I can do here, and I would have to go to Ville Neuve, about six hours in the train, and live there if I want to go into that line of work. Of course I do not want to leave Blérancourt. That and the fact that I am not allowed to drive a car, but have to always be driven, usually by a rather poor driver, are the only two things I could wish changed. In every other respect I love the work in all its phases.

Anne I have no idea when we are coming back. Edith Farr is going to be married in the early winter and has asked Anne to be a bridesmaid. She naturally wants to be back in time for the wedding but does not know when it will take place yet. If all goes well at home, and you *all* keep well, and do not especially need me, I should very much like to stay my entire six months. That will not be up till February. But if the weather is severe here and we are not as comfortable as we expect to be, perhaps I will change my mind. We really have not made any definite plans yet.

Now for the Sunday fête. The day was wonderful, clear and mild, with a very blue sky and tiny floating clouds. We had an 11:30 lunch, and then each of us went in a large camion to a village to collect the children. I had both Pont St. Mard and Guny. These two are our most distant villages, about six miles away, and we had to go slowly when the forty children were in, as the camion is rather rough riding. I also collected the two schoolteachers and took them too.

We got back to the *place* at Blérancourt at 1:45, and the fête was supposed to begin at two. It was a half an hour late, however, as the band did not arrive until then from Soissons. I felt as if I were in the final day of Rose Cottage as I marshaled the children in and out of the various drills and games, and finally helped serve hot chocolate and cakes to the entire bunch.

The drills and gymnastics came off very well, and it is quite surprising how well the children have learned working together, and the sport of games, and two months. The Latin races entirely lack the



sporting instinct in games which is so strongly developed in American and English children. Doran, the Texan girl who is in charge of the work, is one of the most efficient and objectionable people I have ever met. We all got much tried with her at times, as she so impressed with her own importance and ability that she is hopeless. She is the only one here who is not of our class, and consequently is hard to deal with on that account.

After the fête, and the distribution of prizes, we took the children, 350 altogether, back to their villages, and then rested on our laurels. On Tuesday evening Anne, Tommy, Dewhurst and I went on a picnic. I had some bacon, sliced very thin, which I had bought in Paris, and we made a fire and cooked it, and also scrambled eggs and tomatoes together. We took three of the dogs with us, and they sat just on the edge of the circle watching everything we did with glistening eyes. When we had finished we let them have the remains. We have another dog here now, a six-week-old Scotch terrier, the offspring of a pair of terriers that belonged to one of the Highland regiments. She is the spunkiest and cutest puppy I have ever seen.

With love to everyone,  
Affectionately, Marian

Letter dated 10 October 1920

Blérancourt  
October 10th

This is Sunday afternoon, and the first day of rest Anne and I have had for some time. This morning we had to spend sorting Boy Scouts things in the store, but now we are all sitting out on the lawn in most comfortable armchairs, enjoying the sunshine. We have had wonderful weather so far, and everyone says it may continue until almost Thanksgiving. Every day is clear and quite mild, so far we have not had any frost, but I think we will soon. Poilu, who is completely well now, is lying at my feet. He has found a dead bird, and in Bobs' best style has rolled in it. He now smells like the new dog perfume "*quelques animaux*," as Anne has named it, for the famous perfume called "*quelques fleurs*."

Miss Morgan and Mrs. Dike arrived last night to spend Sunday. Just as they were leaving Paris, a taxi ran into them in the Bois de Bologne and wrecked their car and itself. Fortunately neither of them were injured, but the taxi driver's back was broken. They hired a car to come down here in.

Yesterday afternoon I had a fine time. I got through all of my work before lunch, so right afterwards I put on my old skirt and blue smock and went out to help Maynard and Dewhurst clean their cars in the garage. Is it the first chance I have had since I have been here to play with a Ford or Dodge engine, and I certainly enjoyed it. Also it is the first time I have gotten my hands thoroughly dirty, as I usually have to keep very neat. It was a pleasant change.

Our new directrice, Mrs. Elliott, and her cousin, Gabriella Tilghman, from Philadelphia, arrived Thursday evening. There was universal regret among the unit when they came, as Anne was very popular as directrice pro-tem, and perfectly capable of doing the work. But I think the committee had asked Mrs. Elliott to come back here as directrice when she went home last June. She had been stationed at Laon. She seems quite nice, but rather easy-going. I think she will be inclined to let Anne do most of the work for her. However I may misjudge her. Gabriella Tilghman is going to be a chauffeur. Our unit is full now, as there are eighteen here, and we have had to divide our long table in the dining room and make two shorter ones, running across the room. Mrs. Elliott presides at one and

Anne at the other. I am now at hers (Anne's), and we have selected the choicer spirits to sit there too. We call it the second table, for children and chauffeurs.

I got five letters from home Today, also the notice that my fur coat was arriving at Havre, so I should get it in a couple of weeks. What a terrible accident Elizabeth Black had. I am glad she will recover. It was a close call. I will stop now and write to George, as it is his birthday.

Affectionately, Marian

Letter dated 13 October 1920

Blérancourt  
October 13th

This was intended to be a birthday letter for Auntie, and should have been written yesterday, but I found 111 francs extra in my *caisse* late in the afternoon, and in my excitement of planning how I would spend it, I forgot to write until it was too late. Then this morning I discovered it was money for some chairs that Maynard had given me. Well, "*tant pis*," as Anne would say.

On Monday afternoon Anne and I decided we would cook our supper out of doors, so we went to a favorite spot high up on the hill above Blérancourdelle and made two small fires. On one we cooked bacon, fried tomatoes, with creamed brown gravy, and in the hot embers of the other we roasted some corn-on-the-cob, which came from an American farmer near Compiègne. It was a delicious meal. Our gypsy blood calls for an out-of-door meal about once a week, also it makes a change in our usual meals.

On Sunday afternoon, after I had finished my letter to you, Anne, Dewhurst and I decided to take a long walk, so, accompanied by Peppy and Poilu, we started and took a seven mile walk. It was slightly overcast, and a rather cool afternoon, a wonderful time for a walk. We first climbed to the top of the highest hill, then followed a small path through fields until it disappeared, then we walked across fields and ended up on the pampcel (?) road about three miles from Blérancourt. The dogs scared up several flocks of quail, which they chased with great pleasure. One of the quail almost flew into my face, it was so low.

We went by three old gun sites, where the French had had guns which commanded the whole valley, and so quantities of dugouts, some still camouflaged, also heaps of old war material, barbed wire, cheveux de frises, old canteens, rifles, shells, etc. It was very interesting to see the aftermath of war, lying in the hedgerows of the green wheat fields. Dewhurst, like most English girls, is a good walker, and both Anne and I are getting very good training, as we walk every day after tea.

The most tragic accident happened last week, and all of the Blérancourt committee has been much depressed since. The boiler, in which all of our hot water is heated, sprung a very bad leak, and we have not been able to have any baths or hot water for over a week. The local plumber most unfortunately chose this week to get married and is away on his honeymoon, so we have not been able to get the boiler repaired yet! Each evening Anne and I have heated a small saucepan of water on our little alcohol stove, to wash with, but very few of the girls have stoves, and the laments for hot water are numerous and loud.

We have another dog here now. This makes ten, so we have been obliged to make a new rule,

forbidding all dogs to enter the dining room. They were very clever, and learned in two days not to come in during meals. The new dog is a small Sealynham terrier, belonging to Tilghman, named Madelon. She's very cunning, but most obstreperous, and excites all the other dogs to fight, then slips out of the fight herself.

This afternoon, Kate Lewis, Tommy and I got permission to go over to Coucy and take tea with Miss Rockwell. We had a fine time, and after tea went up to the ruins of the old château, and sat and watched the sunset from the walls. The Germans blew up the entire town as well as the historic old château, and it took hundreds of tons of dynamite to do it. It seems like such needless destruction.

With love to all, and birthday greetings to Auntie,  
from Marian

Letter dated 17 October 1920

October 17th

I have received two letters from home since I last wrote, one from Eleanor of the 4th and Auntie's of September 30th, also several enclosures. They were most welcome. I am so glad George has his Ford sedan, and I hope it will be satisfactory.

I am learning a great deal about automobiles from Dewhurst, and will be pretty expert about taking care of them, as well as driving, when I return. I am much pleased that you are make a change in chauffeurs, as you remember I wanted you to get rid of Charles as soon as you moved back to town. I think Alfred gives him all kinds of Bolshevist ideas, and I am sure you will find a more satisfactory man. 1932 [Locust St.] will be quite cleared out by the time Grier and George take what they need. It is a very good thing as it has had far too much in the third floor, also we will no longer have to store any furniture.

Today was a red-letter day for Anne and me, because we finally took our joy-ride to Reims, which we have been planning to go on ever since we have been here. Maynard, the English girl, drove us in her Ford camionette, and Kate Lewis, Anne and I, and Poilu went along. We put cushions in the back of the car, rolled up the side curtains, and Anne, Poilu and I, and a large basket of lunch, reclined at ease on the floor. I had bought a duck which our cook roasted for us yesterday, and we had it, with bread, cheese, pâté de fois de grasse [sic], hot coffee, and cherry brandy and grapes, for a picnic lunch. We started at nine this morning and did not get back until 6:30 p.m. From Blérancourt we went to Soissons, then along a part of the Chemin des Dames to Fismes, then to Reims, and out to Berry au Bac where the famous Hill 108 is, and then home by another road which finally intersected the Soissons road.

Soissons is badly destroyed, but is being rebuilt, also the surrounding country is being cultivated, a thing which is impossible further on. The Chemin des Dames is exactly what my mental picture of a country left absolutely desolate by war ought to look like. There were gaunt specters of trees standing on either side of the road, barbed wire entanglements in the fields, huge shell holes everywhere, and dugouts all along the roadside. We got out when we got to what looked like an interesting one and explored it, as deep in as our matches would light it up. It was very large and well built, and reminded me of the Tombs of the Kings in Egypt.

All of the bridges over the rivers and canals have been destroyed, and in most cases temporary ones have been built. The road was one of the Routes Nationales and had been repaired, so was excellent all

the way. We stopped about fifteen kilometers this side of Reims for lunch, which we ate in a large shell hole by the roadside. The Reims cathedral and town are most interesting. I cannot understand why any of the cathedral is left standing, as it is such a prominent target on a level plain, that it should have been completely blown to pieces. The houses around it are entirely destroyed. The cathedral is being partially restored by the Beaux Arts in Paris, but of course the beautiful stained glass can never be replaced, and not a vestige of the former windows remains, although Maynard hunted in a couple of curio shops, hoping to find a bit as a souvenir.

She is a scream, she is so typically what our idea of an English person ought to be. She always carefully explains the point of any joke she reads to us at the table, and the rest of us have to avoid looking at each other while she is explaining, to keep from laughing. But she is a wonderful person to have here, as she is different from us and keeps us from being too American. The other English girl, Dewhurst, is from London, and quite a different type from Maynard, although typically English. I think perhaps living in London has broadened her, and also she has been with Americans for the past two years, so her sense of humor is very keen.

After we had walked all around the cathedral and examined as much of the interior as we were allowed to, we went over to Berry au Bac, near the river Vesle, where the famous Hill 108 is. Anne and I climbed to the summit and looked into the two craters from the central ridge, which is all that is left of the hill. The Germans blew up one side, burying about 250 French, and later the French blew up the other side, killing 400 Germans. These bodies are all in the hill, covered with debris and much unexploded dynamite, consequently the French are afraid to do any excavating. I think they will keep it exactly as it is as a memorial. Just now it looks like an extinct volcano with two craters. I am enclosing some postals of it, and Reims. Please keep them for me, as I have no duplicates.

From Berry au Bac we went through miles of desolate country covered with trenches, dugouts, and the rest of the remains of a war. Occasionally we passed a soldier's grave, but very rarely, as all of the bodies have been moved into central cemeteries, which are about ten miles apart, and which are kept in the most beautiful order.

With love to all, Marian

Letter dated 18 October 1920

Monday morning

October 18th

It rained hard all of last night and Today it is pouring to, so as I will not get this letter mailed until lunchtime, I am adding some more to it. Anne heard Today that Henry and Hester are sailing Tomorrow for a six-week trip abroad. We are much pleased at the prospect of seeing them. Katherine has just received a cable saying "Bartol estate settled," and seems much relieved that a conclusion has finally been reached. She has been living on her savings for the last two years, and was getting very nervous because they were almost used up, and the lawsuit still hung fire. She will be satisfied with almost any agreement. She has never mentioned Marcel to me, but Anne thinks she is going ahead to get a divorce, and then will probably married John Ware, whom she seeing a great deal of. Didier is now in business and Lyons, and Henri is living with Katherine until he either goes out to Baghdad, or his class in the Army is called. I don't know which will happen first.

We had a cinema performance on Thursday evening, given by a traveling company. It was pretty good, but the amusing thing was that one of the films was the Steeplechase Pier at Atlantic City, with people doing all of the funny stunts. It was received with shrieks of laughter from the villagers, and equal, although more subdued, enthusiasm from our French and English workers. The other film was *Salomé*, in colors, and was delicious, as the costumes were very full, with long flowing trains.

I wish you would send me over my galoshes, by registered mail, to Morgan Harjes & Co. I think I will need them later, and cannot buy any in Paris. I have tried eight stores, and apparently they are an American invention.

I like the new directrice, Mrs. Elliott, very much now. She is very nice, and easy to get on with, and since we have all recovered from our disappointment in having her sent here, things are going swimmingly. Agnes Doran is the only fly in the ointment, and fortunately she is in Paris several days each week now, and is going home in December. Marion Walton, one of our chauffeurs, leaves Tomorrow, and I am moving into her room, which is next to Anne's and gets more sun than my present one. It will be warmer also. Our bath is not repaired yet, but will be by Wednesday. This makes two weeks without baths or hot water, and we are beginning to know how the men in the army felt. The life over here, in the country and out of doors most of the time, suits me perfectly, and I never felt better in my life.

Affectionately, Marian

Letter dated [19–23] October 1920

Our bath is finished and the rejoicing among the committee was great. I got the first bath, directly after tea on Wednesday, but discovered certain drawbacks while bathing. Our new boiler is a French creation and the water has to run into your bath all the time while the fire is going to prevent the boiler from overheating. Thus the whole time you are in the tub the temperature of the water is changing. I was almost parboiled before I got out. However we hope to become more expert in the use of our new acquisition, and probably will not know how to bathe in an ordinary tub again.

Anne went up to Paris this morning to order some things for the *ouvroir*, and took Poilu along to have his picture taken with her. I hope it will turn out successfully. She will spend the night with Katherine and come back Tomorrow afternoon.

Yesterday morning I went in to Compiègne to do some shopping for the *magasin*. I also bought a pair of rabbits for a woman in Blérancourt. I really did not know how to select rabbits, but neither did Dewhurst, so we went to the market and finally picked out a pair of white Russian rabbits with gray ears and noses. We bought them on their looks, but they turned out to be very good ones as well. The housekeeper went in with us to do her semi-weekly shopping, and we brought the Dodge back packed with supplies of all kinds, and top-dressed the load with five wicker armchairs and a cradle.

When I got back to Blérancourt I found that my things had all been moved to my new room, so I arranged them after lunch, and am finally settled now. The room is identical in size and build with my former one, so the move was very easy.

We have had a black frost for the past two nights, and all of our flowers are dead in the garden. The mornings and evenings are very cold but in the middle of the day the sun is still quite hot. The chauffeurs are quite depressed, as they have to begin to drain their radiators every night now.

Yesterday afternoon I had a fine time outfitting two little children from our stock of clothing in the store—a little boy, Louis, fifteen months old, with wavy yellow hair and big blue eyes. His father has tuberculosis, and he is one of a family of ten children, so he has lived at the hospital for year. He was brought there in a dying condition at the age of two months, but is now a beautiful child. The other baby was ten months old, a girl named Annette. Her parents both died in the influenza a week after she was born, and she is living at the hospital as she has no home. She has tight brown curls and gray eyes and is one of the prettiest babies I have ever seen. I gave them each two pairs of Mary's woolen stockings, as well as clothing from the store.

With much love to all,  
Affectionately, Marian

I will send a picture of myself in uniform as soon as I have one taken.

Letter dated 24 October 1920

October 24th

I have received Auntie's letter of October 6th and Eleanor's of the 8th since I last wrote, and they were most welcome. The clipping about the will settlement seems a little mixed up to Anne and me but when we see Henry we will be able to get more definite information. I hope Aunt Kate does not see the clipping. Katherine has gone over to England to visit a friend, and has been delayed coming back by the coal strike, consequently when Anne spent last Thursday night in Paris, she stayed at the apartment alone with Henri, as Katherine never arrived as was expected. Anne was very much amused by the incident, but Henri was quite shocked, with his French point of view.

I have asked Anne to describe exactly what her work as sous-directrice is for you, and she says it is impossible, as she has practically nothing definite to do since Mrs. Elliott's arrival. There really was no need for Mrs. Elliott here, but since the committee brought her over, she had to come. Anne is supposed to be her assistant, but there is not quite enough for two to do, consequently Anne does all the petty jobs that Mrs. E. doesn't want to do.

We are just starting an *ouvroir* here, which will give out material to be made up by women in our different villages, and then I will sell the finished garments, sheets, etc., in the *magasin*. Anne is to be in charge of that, and if she finds it does not give her enough to do, will see Mrs. Dike the first time she goes to Paris. The only thing is she is afraid to say much for fear she will be transferred to work in some other center, and of course does not want to leave Blérancourt. No one who has ever stationed here wants to be moved, as this is by far the nicest place.

You ask about the finances of my store also. I send in requisitions to the Paris office twice a month for my supplies. These are purchased and paid for in Paris and shipped out in camions. I turn in the store receipts twice a week to the cashier of our unit, who sends the money up to Paris once a month with her other financial statements. The store is also the agent of the Préfecture of the Aisne, and everything that is sold for the Préfecture has to be accounted for to them when I take the receipts and statements to Laon once a month.

The peasants who are able pay make their purchases at the store, but when they come in and say they need things but have no money, we send the *marraine* of their village to investigate, and if their story is

true, and they are deserving of help, we either give them clothes and household supplies or arrange to let them pay after several months, when their next crop comes in, etc. Of course there are still some families of refugees coming back, and we have to find houses for them and then outfit them with everything. They are allowed 1000 fr. as *dommage de guerre* by the government to buy their furniture with, and as they usually get their furniture from our store, we accept the *dommage de guerre* notes as payment.

This afternoon I went over to Vic with Maynard to take the Boy Scout leader over. His name is Marquette, and he was formerly a dentist, and studied dentistry in the Evans Institute in Philadelphia. We stayed in Vic long enough to see the committee's headquarters and then returned home by moonlight. The daylight saving schedule was changed last night, and we are now back to sun time, and consequently it was dark by 5:30. Vic is in the Aisne valley, and must be frightfully damp, as the committees *baragues* are right on the river bank. I wouldn't be stationed there for anything. I saw Rose Dolan and an English girl named Peacock. They were cleaning the car; as the Vic motto is "we *work* at Vic," I suppose it holds good even on Sundays. They don't really work any harder than we do, but have no system, consequently never get through. Three cheers for Blérancourt.

I got a fine letter from Mary Smith Today.

With love to all,  
Affectionately, Marian

Letter dated 27 October 1920

October 27th

I'm sitting in my room waiting for the dinner gong to ring. My stove is making the room a delicious temperature, and Peppy is lying curled up in the middle of my bed, sleeping soundly. The room is awfully comfortable since I got my stove, but before that, last week, it was really terribly cold. Eleanor would have hated it. I only minded getting up and dressing in practically the same temperature as out of doors. However that is over now, and Jeanne lights my fire at 7 a.m., I lie in bed and let the room get warmer until 7:30, then I get washed and dressed for breakfast at eight. We usually have time afterwards take a short walk, go to mail letters, etc., before work starts at nine. Office hours are from 9-12 and 2-6 with three quarters of an hour off at about 4:20 for tea. Fortunately I don't have to keep office hours, as I am my own boss.

I am enclosing a picture of the entrance gate, which also shows the old moat walls. I don't know whether I have sent it to you before, but it is one of the best I have seen. The old garden where our *baragues* are built is just to the left of this picture. To-night the moon is full, and is shining through the gateway, which is built of soft gray stone, and looks like silver in the moonlight.

I am going up to Paris on Saturday for my three days leave, and will stay at the hotel Roblin. Miss Rockwell is going up from Coucy at the same time and will be at the same hotel, then we will all come back together on Wednesday afternoon. Anne's birthday is on the sixth, so I am going to bring back a birthday cake for her. Aunt Kate writes to her at least twice a week, and seems to miss her terribly. Undoubtedly she is her favorite grandchild.

I am going to send you each handkerchiefs from Paris by registered mail, and hope they will arrive by Christmas, but the mail is so slow that you cannot be sure. I understand that Christmas is a very busy

time here, as the Comité gives a party to the children of the different villages, and they number several hundred.

This afternoon I went out to St. Paul, and went to see an old woman of eighty-two, and found her sawing wood for her stove. She looked like a little gnome as she sawed. I took her out a present of some warm clothing for the winter, and she was pathetically grateful. She lives entirely alone in a little wooden shack and does all of her own work. My goddaughter is undoubtedly the most wretched looking baby in St. Paul. She is thin, wizened, ugly, and has teething rash. There is great room for improvement in her looks as she grows older.

Jill, our Scotch terrier puppy, has learned to beg, and sits up on her little legs, waving her front paws in the air in the most ridiculous way. She is one of the cutest and worst-tempered puppies I have ever seen.

Monday was a terribly busy day in the *magasin*. There were over 100 people there in the morning, so it kept me very busy at the *caisse*. I am so glad Grier is getting on nicely in New York.

With love to all, Marian

Letter dated 31 October 1920

Hotel Roblin, Paris  
October 31st

Tommy, Kate Lewis, and I came up from Blérancourt yesterday evening and are staying at the Roblin. It is the hotel Aunt Kate stayed at, and is a very nice, small one. It is on the rue Chaveau Lagarde, about 100 yards from the Madeleine. We have a double and a single room and a bath, which we are enjoying to the limit. Tommy's time with the committee is up, so she is sailing on Saturday. As Today and Tomorrow are both holidays, we have five days instead of three, and do not have to return to Blérancourt until Thursday.

I phoned Katherine this morning, and found she was just starting to Fontainebleau to spend the day, I inferred with Mr. Ware. Henry and Hester land at Boulogne Today and will be at the hotel Edouard VII Tomorrow, so I will get in touch with them there.

This morning Tommy and I went to the American Episcopal Church, but did not see anyone we knew, except the Oliver Eaton Cromwells. They are an awful looking pair, he very unhealthy looking and she quite demi-monde. We all three lunched at the Marquery and met Walton, one of the Blérancourt girls who left last week, there, with her mother. Mrs. Walton came over for a short trip and wants her daughter to go back with her, but Walton is as fascinated with France as Grier was, and would like to spend the winter over here. I don't know what she will eventually decide to do.

All the streets are decorated with large posters advertising the National Loan. The drive began on October 20 and will continue for a month. This afternoon we paid calls on various friends, but found them mostly out-of-town for the holiday Tomorrow, then had tea with Walton. Eleanor's birthday is a great day in France, as the feast of the Toussaint is celebrated everywhere. The stores are all closed, and everyone goes out to the parks, restaurants, etc. I have to wait until Tuesday to do my shopping, and I think I will order a couple of dresses, a blue serge street dress and an afternoon dress to match my new hat.



Anne got a letter from her cousin Edith Farr asking her to be a bridesmaid at her wedding the end of January, so she expects to sail as soon as her time here with the committee is up, the middle of January. I am going to see Mrs. Dike on Tuesday and try to arrange to come back with Anne. The committee does not count your six months as beginning until you register here in Paris, so as I did not register until August 17th, my six months are not up until February 17th. However I did not know this until I got over here, and it would only be four weeks short if I leave with Anne. I do not think Mrs. Dike can object, as I am one of the few entirely volunteer workers the committee has, and also I did not sign up for six months, as you remember. There are only four people at Blérancourt who pay board, and Anne and I are two of the four. I thought it was entirely a volunteer committee when Miss. Caldwell talked to me about it, but she was evidently mistaken, because most of the workers have their expenses paid, although only a few get a salary. I will let you know in my next letter the result of my interview with Mrs. Dike, and if I do leave in January, you can expect me back about the 26th of that month.

I went in to Compiègne on Friday afternoon with Tilghman and the one touring car (a Ford) that the committee possesses. We want to take Mlle. Dumon, the nurse, to the train, and do some errands, which included a visit to the pâtisserie just before starting for home. When we started, we found that our lights were not working, so we had to run home by the light from one intermittent bulb. It was quite enough in the open, but going through the forest for five miles was rather dark. Just as Tilghman finished explaining to me how she could see in the dark like an owl, we hit a stone pile with our right front wheel, which bent the steering rod and gave us a lurch to the left-hand side of the road the rest of the way home. It was most amusing.

On Friday night we had a small and select party as a farewell to Tommy. We held it in Dewhurst's room, and first played bridge, then made a Welsh rarebit, and had cake and two bottles of champagne. This costs 16 francs a quart for the very best brands. The party consisted of Anne, Tommy, Maynard, Lewis, Smith, Dewhurst, and myself, and did not break up until 11:30. We also invited Mrs. Elliott (to be polite) but she did not attend. Her dog, Destroyer, has been quite sick, and I got a large package of medicine for him in Compiègne. We really spend quite a lot of time at Blérancourt taking care of the nine dogs, in sickness and in health, but they are such good company they are worth the trouble.

With many happy returns of the day for E., I am,  
Affectionately, Marian

Three cheers that Aunt has changed her veil!

Letter dated 2 November 1920

Hotel Roblin, Paris  
November 2nd

Paris is as lovely as ever, as Grier can always testify, and I am enjoying every minute of my stay here. Henry and Hester are at the Edouard VII, about three blocks from the Roblin. They arrived yesterday afternoon, and I have talked to Hester on the phone twice, but have not seen her yet. I am going to take lunch with them Tomorrow, at Prunier's, the famous lobster restaurant, and hope to hear all the details of the will settlement. Henri came in to see me yesterday and told me some, but I think he had it wrong, as the amount they got they got outright was only \$220,000. This seems to me far too small, however it may be correct.

I took tea with Katherine this afternoon, and met Mr. John Ware, who was there also, and evidently very much at home. He is about 55 years old, quite tall and stout, grayish hair, and very agreeable and nice. I think Katherine will probably marry him when she gets her divorce (which she has never mentioned) and I think he will take very good care of her and make her happy.

I went shopping this morning at the Galleries Lafayette. It is surprising how many small errands you can accumulate in the month. Then we went to the committee to report to Mrs. Tracy. She is nothing like as good as Aunt Kate in that job, and utterly lacks her magnetism. We lunched with Miss Rockwell and Mrs. Vernon at a restaurant called the Royal Topsy. They are in Paris for five days, staying at the Burgandy, because they could not get in here. When Kate and I leave we are going to give them our room and bath in this hotel.

After lunch I went to the Customs House to get my fur coat, which had been there two weeks. The American Express Co. said if I want to get it myself, I could get it through without paying the luxury tax on all furs. I succeeded in doing this, and only had to pay 3.40 for stamps on receipts. The red tape was endless, but that at the end of 1 1/2 hours I walked out with it on my arm. It traveled beautifully, and I certainly was glad to get it, as the weather is very cold now. The belt was not with it, but I think I did not send it to storage with the coat. Look on my closet shelf, and also in the camphor closet for it, and if you can't find it, I am enclosing the receipt from the coat, so that you can trace it at Wanamaker's. I do not need the belt, as I have bought a fancy beaded one to wear with it.

I took your advice and ordered a dress to match my hat, and also the coat, as they go very well together. I am having it made by Katherine's dressmaker, who was the head fitter at Caillot Soeurs. It is gray duveytone and satin, embroidered in colors with Russian embroidery. When I see what it is like, I will get a couple of other dresses. I think I must have one from Worth's, just for the name.

On Monday morning we wandered all over the Rive Gauche, going into various curiosity shops, and finally lunched at an Italian restaurant where we sampled all of the plats du jour, which were delicious, and most unusual.

Afterwards Tommy took us to call on M. and Mme. Ali Kuli Khan. He was the representative of Persia at the peace conference, and has just been appointed Persian minister to Poland and Lithuania. Of course he cannot go to Poland at present, so he is waiting in Paris until conditions are more settled. He married a very attractive woman from Washington, and they have three children, who are a queer mixture of Persian and American. We saw the two little girls, the boy is at school at Eton. We arrived just as about fifteen Persian men were leaving. They had been there for a buffet luncheon, and were sailing for Persia next week. It takes two and half months to get to Tehran at present as you have to go by way of Bombay. The Persians are fine looking men, dark-haired, olive skins and very regular features. They have almost all attended Oxford University, and speak perfect English. Ali Kuli Khan was the most cultured, interesting talker, and we enjoyed our visit tremendously. But Mme. Khan was very much like cousin Melanie, and soared up in mental clouds, but when she did descend was very nice. The little girls were darlings.

Tomorrow evening we are going to the Cirque d'Hiver to see a trained hippopotamus named Nora. I saw the posters and fell for it. Auntie will remember little Risa at the zoo in Amsterdam. What are the Lennig family going to do this winter? Will they be with Mrs. Johnson? I'm afraid the children will have forgotten me completely. I finally heard from Helen Semple, and she said she had written twice before. Hester and Henry are coming out to Blérancourt to spend a day next week and see some of the devastated sections. I'm awfully sorry that you two could not arrange to come over and see it too, but I

prefer a niece or nephew, to having you!

Affectionately, Marian

Letter dated 6 November 1920

Blérancourt  
November 6th

Your letters of the 15th, 19th, and 21st came yesterday, also one from Maisie, Aunt Sita, and Gay, so it was a red letter day for me. I am so sorry to hear of the tragedy in Herrington's family, but it was quite unavoidable. I know Sally feels terribly. I wish I could see George and Maisie all settled in their new home. I am afraid the novelty will have worn off before I get back. However you can't be in two places at once, and I am really having a very unusual and interesting experience, living and working in the devastated regions. I hope your new chauffeur turns out well. If he doesn't there are plenty of others to choose from. In any case you are well rid of Charles, who, while an excellent mechanic, had become an unwilling worker. I am glad that McFadgen is turning out so well. I think we picked well when we took him.

The farmers of France are very far behind us in their primitive methods, but can teach us a great deal about intensive cultivation, fertilization, and working hours. I find the comparison of the two methods of farming very interesting. As soon as I have a free afternoon I am going out to visit a large farm at St. Aubin, one of our villages. The farmer's wife, Mme. Lemoine, has invited me to come and go through the barns etc. and I am certainly going the first chance I get. I wish it were possible for me to do some agricultural work while I am with the committee, but there does not seem to be a chance at present.

I could not see Mrs. Dike when I was in Paris, as she was sick, but I am communicating with her through Mrs. Elliott Today, and will let you know the result. Of course if it is not considered good form to leave before I have been in France six months, I won't do it, but if possible I would like to come across with Anne. Today is Anne's 24th birthday, so we are going to cook some lobster Newberg this evening and celebrate the occasion. She got several presents from her family which Hester brought over with her and I brought down from Paris. I got her some embroidered handkerchiefs on the Rue de Rivoli. Everyone advises me not to send any small packages by registered mail, so I won't try to send you handkerchiefs for Christmas presents, but will bring them with me when I come.

Our unit is quite small over this Sunday as five are away *en permission*. Kate and I got back on Thursday evening, after a delightful holiday of five days. Dewhurst and Priouveau met us with the Dodge and helped us to get our hand luggage, which was considerable, into the car. I have bought a shawl strap and cover, and had it, as well as my suitcase and Anne's. I took my uniform up to be cleaned, also two pairs of shoes to the cobblers, so I am all fixed up for sometime to come.

Hester and Henry expect to come down on Monday and spend the night here, and on Tuesday hire a car and go on to Soissons, over the Chemin des Dames to Reims, and then by train to Paris.

I am enclosing a letter and card for Grier. I found them at Morgan Harjes, and they had not forwarded them to me as per instructions. This morning I went to Chauny with Dewhurst. We took Jill, a Scotch terrier puppy, to see the vet. She either has a rabbit bone stuck in her throat, or has a severe cold, bronchitis etc. For the past two days she has been quite poorly and spends most of her time in my office lying on a small pillow. This afternoon she cheered up, and, aided by Madelon, tore the pillow into a

thousand pieces and scattered them to the four winds. I never saw such a sight as our office floor afterwards.

Such an amusing thing happened while I was away, I must write it. A woman from my village has been at the hospital waiting the birth of her baby. She has been there over three weeks and was much bored, so I used to take her little presents, books to read, etc., and she became very fond of me. The unit all took an interest in her, and the nurse used to report how she was to me. On Monday the baby was born, and Prioleau announced at the dinner table, "Bartol's baby was born Today! It is a fine large girl, and they're both doing well!" There were shrieks of laughter, and blushes from M. Orchibeuf, but ever since the baby is known as "Bartol's baby."

Did George insure my baggage for me? I wrote to him to do so, but never heard from him. I think the chances are this *baraque* won't burn again, but if it did, it would be very comforting to have had my trunk insured. The electric light is working now in the main building. It is run by a little engine like the Delco system, but is not as good, as the light is not very strong. I would be afraid to use my electric iron, as it might ruin the entire plant, so I keep the iron in Paris, and if I want anything pressed here, have one of the maids do it for me.

I left Tommy in Paris at the Roblin. Her steamer was postponed from Saturday to Monday, so she will be alone for a few days. She and I lunched with her friend the Comtesse de la Rochette at Prunier's, on Thursday before I went to the train. Mme. de la R. is very nice and urged me to let her know the next time I was in Paris, and she would show me some good places to buy clothes etc. Do you remember how amused Father always was because we used to go shopping in every new place? I thought of it when she spoke.

We are going to have a roast goose for Thanksgiving, so think of us when you eat your turkey.

With love to all,  
Affectionately, Marian

Letter dated 9 November 1920

Blérancourt  
November 9th

Your combined letter of October 24th with the furniture plan of 248 S. 22nd just reached me. I was delighted with the plan, and can see almost exactly how the house looks. I should think 1932 [Locust St.] would need a few pieces of furniture from the farm, as it must be a little bare in the third floor. Fortunately we have more than enough and perhaps this will weed out the fifth floor a little. I think you are very wise to get your fourth maid for a part of the time only, as unless you got one who also did the laundry, she would not have enough to do, with such a small family. I got a long letter from an Aunt Ellen from Lenox, enclosing some exquisite red maple leaves. Anne was with me when I opened it and was, I thought, unduly amused at the enclosure.

Life here is going on much as usual. The weather has turned very cold and we have a heavy frost every night now. Our *baraques* are most comfortable, however, and the little stoves keep them very warm. Anne has gone up to Paris for her leave, and when she returns will bring Henry and Hester with her. They want to spend the night here, and see the surrounding country where we are working, etc.

I have both Poilu and Peppy in my charge, as Dewhurst is away also, on leave. At present they are both asleep in my room, Peppy on the bed, and Poilu under it on his blanket.

Mrs. Dike spent Sunday down here, and I had a most satisfactory talk with her after dinner. The result of it was that I can do exactly as I want to, and stay as long as I can. So I will leave the middle of January, and come back with Anne. Mrs. Dike is very nice, and I have quite reversed the first impression I had of her. Her whole mind is on the committee and the work while she is here, and she is both capable and executive.

I am going to take lunch with her next week to meet M. Bille, who is the head of all the agricultural work, and probably go over to Villeneuve to see the model farm there. I am delighted at the prospect, as it will be a very interesting trip. The farmers are still plowing and drilling wheat around here. It seems very late, but they do it until the middle of December. There is not much snow in this part of France, so the winters are quite open.

I got a letter from Ellen Newbold Lee yesterday. She is living in Paris, and had heard from Suzanne but I was over here, and wanted me to lunch with her the next time I was up.

There's going to be a big fête in Blérancourt on Thursday, Armistice Day, and the Préfecture has presented a *mitrailleuse* to the village which will be erected on the *place*. We will all attend, dressed in our best uniforms and white gloves.

With love to all,  
Affectionately, Marian

Letter dated 13 November 1920

November 13th

My thoughts have been very much both of you all Today, and somehow France seemed farther away from Philadelphia than usual, partly on account of the anniversary, and because there was a directrices' meeting here, and I had to act as one of the hostesses and be very polite to all our visitors. The directrices from the five other centers were here, and each one had a chauffeur, and at least one other person with them, so it made quite a crowd at tea. We had high tea, with brioches, cakes and hot chocolate, also all of the dogs were kept out of the office building during the affair, which only happens when we have extra high guests. Mrs. Dike was also here.

Anne is coming back on Monday at noon and Hester and Henry are coming with her. They will spend the night, and on Tuesday, go to Soissons and Reims in a car I have hired for them. It will be awfully nice to have them here.

Yesterday afternoon I went out to visit the Pierre Lemoine farm, which lies on a hillside above St. Aubin. The house is on one side of a large courtyard, and the barns, granaries, etc., form the other three sides. It is very quaint and looks just like a picture. In the middle of the court is a large manure pile, and the ducks, chickens and geese climb all over it. Just outside the yard is a small blacksmith shop and forge. M. Lemoine is an up-to-date farmer, has a Fordson tractor, and the modern American farm machinery. The house is very attractive, tile floors, huge fireplaces, and lovely old oak furniture. Unlike most French families, Mme. Lemoine has six children, the eldest of whom is eight.

On the way home, I was walking with the dogs, Poilu was chasing some quail in the field, when a white rooster suddenly shot out of some bushes in front of him. The temptation was too strong and Poilu chased him, and bit him in the back, before I could intervene. To appease the owner, I had to give her 10 francs, as she said the rooster would have to be killed, and I think he would. Unfortunately this gave Poilu taste for feathers, and Today he tried chasing a flock of geese on the *place*. One of them turned on him and bit him in the eye. It is quite swollen tonight, and will I hope teach him a lesson.

I received Auntie's letter of the 28th this morning, enclosing Fullerton's article. I am glad to see he has gotten out of Russia safely. I have never heard such a busy time as you have put in moving furniture, etc. I will hardly know the two houses when I see them, although I have an excellent mental picture of everything you have done, due to the diagrams.

The weather here is quite wintry now, and the leaves are almost all gone. The poplar trees are bare, and show the mistletoe which grows all over their branches.

With love to everyone,  
Affectionately, Marian

Letter dated 17 November 1920

Blérancourt  
November 17th

Auntie's letters of October 28 and November 4 and E.'s of November 1st, and also the sample ballot, reached me this morning, and after breakfast I took a warm seat near the stove and read them with great pleasure. The thing that pleased me most was the news that Aunt had ordered two hats without the long veil. Your part-time maid sounds like an excellent idea. I hope she turns out well. Was it an idea from Eleanor's brain? If so, I suppose she has put an extra spotted feather in her cap.

We have had a delightful visit from Hester and Henry. They came back from Paris with Anne on Monday morning and got to Blérancourt at lunchtime. In the afternoon and took them all over the village, Blérancourt, then out to see two of our most devastated villages, Trosly-Loire and St. Paul. They were much interested in the work, and enjoyed themselves greatly. They brought us two boxes of petits four (fancy cakes) and a large box of chocolates, so in the evening we played bridge in my room and ate the refreshments and some liqueur. Henry was as amusing as usual. He plays the same kind of bridge that father did, bidding no trumps whenever possible, and usually making the bid. Hester plays a good conservative game.

Tuesday morning Tilly took them over to Soissons in our touring Ford, and as Anne was busy with the *ouvrier* I went along. We had a puncture just as we got there, which was most fortunate, as it delayed us, and give us a very good excuse for staying and lunching with them. We drove them around the town and showed them the cathedral and the other ruins and then all took lunch at the Croix d'Or, a very good, old-fashioned little inn. It was quite battered up by the bombardment, but has been repaired. The dining room had a red tile floor, and yellow and white barred table cloths and napkins. We had an excellent table d'hôte lunch, and afterwards Henry and Hester hired a car from the garage and went on through Fismes and along the Chemin des Dames to Reims, where they were going to take the train back to Paris. They seemed to enjoy their visit greatly, and told us that our quarters were very luxurious for the devastated regions, which of course they are.

On Saturday evening Tilly went to meet the train at Noyon and ran over a drunken man who was lying in the road. It broke his leg, and she had to take him to the hospital. Yesterday two *gens d'armes* arrived to interview her, I was afraid they were going to make trouble for her, but it was only a matter of form. It seems he is an habitual drunk. The only unfortunate thing was that she did not have her *permis de conduire* with her.

We are having wonderful fall weather now, clear and crisp, only four rainy days since I have been here.

Affectionately, Marian

Letter dated 21 November 1920

Sunday p.m. Nov. 21

Since writing to you on Wednesday nothing of any great interest has happened. We have had a very cold spell of weather, and every morning the frost looks like a light fall of snow. I went for a walk this morning with Dewhurst and four of the dogs, and the woods out to St. Paul were wonderful. All the little puddles were frozen, and the dogs skated across them, the leaves and grass were all white with frost which did not melt even at noon, and they looked like a white fairy carpet. They were great bunches of mistletoe and holly bushes covered with red berries. It looked very much like Christmas.

This morning Anne and I added bacon and eggs to the usual Sunday breakfast, which we have in our rooms. One of my friends at St. Paul gave me two fresh eggs yesterday, and Anne brought the bacon back from Paris with her. Our rooms smelt rather bacony when we finished cooking, but it soon aired out.

On Friday I went to Laon to take the Préfecture money to the treasurer, and also act as interpreter for Maynard and Miss Deming, who was escorting a twelve-year-old girl from Blérancourt to Laon. The child is an orphan, and was being turned over by the committee, who has been taking care of her, to the Préfecture, who now assumes the responsibility. She reminded me strongly of one of the C.A.S.'s wards, much the same costume and appearance. I felt awfully sorry for her, as she wept pitifully when we finally left her, although we had tried to cheer her up first, by giving her hot coffee at a pâtisserie shop. Miss Deming is a lady of about fifty who has been in the committee's employ for four years. She was formerly at the children's colony at Boullay-Thierry. Why she is employed I cannot imagine, as she speaks no French and is a very vague, rather inefficient kind of a woman, although rather nice. I believe she comes from Philadelphia!

After we had disposed of the child, by leaving her at the Préfecture hospice, which is in charge of a sisterhood, Maynard and I spent about an hour getting the preliminaries for an application for a *permis de conduire* for her. Up to now she has only had her English driver's license, but since Tilly's accident, Mrs. Dike has ordered all the chauffeurs get French licenses.

When we got that disposed of, we took lunch at the Hôtel d'Ecu, a very good little hotel, built on the very edge of the town, by the wall, which drops at that point straight down to the valley, a distance of many hundred feet. The dining room had a wonderful view of the entire valley. After lunch we went to the Palais de Justice and got a copy of a birth certificate which Mrs. Elliott wanted, then with the comfortable feeling that we had visited almost every public building, office and official in Laon, we started for home.

It was one of the coldest days we have had and I was thankful to have my fur coat to wear. In it I was very comfortable, even going over the plateau between Coucy and Ainzy, which is the most windswept place on the whole drive. At the very top there are remains of three Roman sarcophagi, built in the side of the hill, with ancient Latin inscriptions of them. This part of France has a very old civilization.

Yesterday Peppy got lost. She ran after my car in the morning when I went out to St. Paul, and as I did not know she was there, I came back without her. In the late afternoon, an old man, whose house I had often been to with Peppy, brought her back. She had arrived there quite exhausted and decided to wait for me there. Dewhurst and I were just starting out to look for her in the Dodge when she arrived, quite crestfallen and decidedly scared.

Mlle. Henneguy has gone up to Paris to buy us a turkey for Thanksgiving. Give my love to all and think of me when you eat yours with cranberry sauce.

Marian

Letter dated 24 November 1920

Blérancourt  
November 24th

I notice that the French ink runs on this paper so I have changed back to my fountain pen. I now like the new one just as much as my beloved variegated pen which Auntie became so attached to that it finally was hers. This one, which she gave me, is even better. I am expecting some American mail Today, as Anne got some yesterday. Hers comes direct, and mine is forwarded from Morgan Harjes. That bank will be glad to have only one Bartol left, as Henry and Hester sail Today. Between H. G. Bartol, J. G. B., and M. G. B., and Aunt Kate, they have been hopelessly mixed up. I think they thought as the name was an unusual one there could only be one person and they have mixed up our mail, but I think only Grier's and my bank account.

The weather has been very cold here since Sunday. Each morning when I get up the frost on the ground looks like a light fall of snow. Our plumbing is put out of commission each evening at six o'clock, to prevent freezing, and even with that precaution the bath (our only one) froze on Sunday, and the pipes burst, so we are again reduced to bathing (intermittently) in our rooms. However with plenty of hot water from our stoves, and a large galvanized basin, it is no hardship. Whenever I need more Ivory soap, I go out to the *magasin* and hunt through refugee sacks until I find the cake. It was the favorite kind to send.

Yesterday I spent in the Dodge with Dewhurst. It was a glorious day, far too good to stay indoors. In the morning we went to Coucy to deliver gasoline, and in the afternoon we delivered Singer sewing machines, which have just arrived from America, to four different villages. The women had ordered them last March, and had quite given up hope of ever seeing them, so they welcomed them with delight.

Last week Dewhurst had the grippe and was sick in bed for three days, during which time I nursed her and made quite a name for myself as a nurse, even with the two V.A.D.s. Of course if you two have been here I would not have shown in comparison, but as Eleanor has often remarked, "a prophet is not without honor, etc." Dewhurst is one of the nicest girls I have ever met, and I have become awfully fond of her. I hope I will see her after we both leave the committee, but as she is probably going up to



India, it is rather doubtful.

I am going up to St. Paul this afternoon *marraining*. There is an old couple who have just returned, and who are living in one of the commune's *maisons provisoires* until their *baraque* is built, whom I called on on Saturday. They have had a most tragic time. Their two sons were killed in the war, and their only daughter died last month, leaving six little children. They owned a small farm, but when they returned there was nothing left but the land, every building had been blown up, the orchard killed, etc. They are 68 and 66, and it is pretty hard to make a fresh start at that age.

Prioleau brought me word yesterday that a young woman in my village had had a baby, a seven months one and that it was most unfortunate, as she had intended to be married to the father next month!

Mrs. Elliott and I are going up to Paris next week to buy toys for Christmas party. I think my previous experience with the C. A. S. at Christmas will be very useful. There are only 900 children altogether, and we are going to have three parties, on three consecutive evenings, of about 300 each. We cannot manage them all at once. We are going to decorate the foyer and trim a large tree. Our plans depend somewhat on the amount of money we will have to spend, and we do not know that yet.

I got a long letter from Aunt Kate yesterday, and I think she misses the work very much, and is quite homesick for Blérancourt. It is clear how soon you get to feeling that a place is home, merely because you are living in it.

With lots of love to all,  
Affectionately, Marian

Letter dated 28 November 1920

Blérancourt (Aisne)  
November 28th

Your letters of November 6, 9 and 10 came on Thursday, also a paper from George about the cement shares, at present standing in my name. I signed it and had Anne witness it, and mailed it back immediately. It was a very good idea to send it to me. I am perfectly delighted with Auntie's Christmas present, which was exchanged at 17, and will certainly buy some clothes with it, probably two dresses, as I do not like the French suits much. It was great of her to send me such a big check.

I am going up to Paris Tomorrow with Mrs. Elliott to buy the Christmas presents for the children, and while I am up, will have my picture taken in uniform, and if it turns out well, will send you one. I hope it will arrive about Christmas. I have written to Katherine to try and get theater tickets for Tuesday night. We will be at the Palais Royale Hôtel. I seem to go to a different one each time I go to Paris, but Mrs. Elliott has selected this one, and we have secured a large double room, with a bath! Three cheers. Our bathtub is not mended here yet. Soon I will be like the A. E. F. and not feel the necessity for bathing at all.

Yesterday one of the neighboring farmers brought in the largest bunch of mistletoe I have ever seen, about three feet in diameter, and perfectly round. It is still attached to the branch of the poplar tree it grew on. For unknown reasons it has been hung on the porch over the entrance to our office, and Anne and I have been teased within an inch of our lives in consequence. It really is a very effective place, but it blocks the daylight considerably. I will send you a snapshot of it.

Our Thanksgiving dinner came off with great *éclat* on Thursday evening. The turkeys were a slight disappointment, as they were what is called *dindoneau*, and were really no bigger than large chickens. However they were delicious, also the cranberry and mince pies, to say nothing of the champagne. Doran, the Texan, that very cheerful after taking one glass, and as she was dressed as a nun, the effect was most amusing. Remembering Auntie's advice, I selected a becoming costume, and instead of going as a refugee, which was a very popular choice, I wore my blue smock, with a black leather belt, black silk bloomers and a dark blue beret on my head. With my face made up, it was quite effective. Mrs. Elliott had chosen exactly the same costume, except for a red beret, so we posed as art students from the Latin quarter. Anne dressed up as old Black Joe, blackened her face and made a white beard out of absorbent cotton. No one recognized her at all, as she had made herself quite fat by stuffing pillows inside her overalls. Kate was an Apache, in some *vêtements usagés* from the store, and was splendid. Dewhurst was a Pierrot, in black-and-white sateen, also from the store. Tilly dressed up in M. Orchibeuf's clothes, he was fortunately away in Paris, and led his dog around on a leash. She took him off splendidly, put on a black mustache, and imitated his voice and walk. Everyone was convulsed by it. The nurse, Mlle. Cosse, dressed up as one of the mechanics from our shop, and made a mustache and goatee with burnt cork. In the middle of dinner she got a hurry call and had to go out and interview the man who had come for her to take her to see his wife, dressed as she was. The man's expression when he saw her was the most amusing thing I have ever seen.

After dinner we danced the Virginia Reel, which was absolutely new to all the English and French, and was rather mixed up in consequence. The dogs were terrified by the unusual costumes and the dancing and seven of them took refuge under the big sofa, where they peered out. Poilu's eyes were as green as a wolf's, and you could just see them shining from under the edge of the cover.

Thank you for sending my galoshes. I expect they will arrive any day now. So far I have not needed them as we have had very little rain, and consequently no mud, but my fur coat has been a perfect joy to me. I wear it constantly. I can't think why I was foolish enough not to bring it with me.

Are you engaging the same force on the farm for next year or are you making any changes? The farmers in France are having the same difficulty that we are in securing help. All of the farmhands want to work in factories and have short working hours.

On Friday night I took a ride which five years ago I would not have considered possible. It just shows how much the war has changed everyone. M. Marquette, the head of the Boy Scouts, arrived here at 6:30, and said he had to be taken to Anizy that evening, a seventeen-mile trip. So Kate was told to run him over, and I went with her, as we are never supposed to make night runs alone. We left here about 8:30 and got back at 11:15. It was full moon, and quite cold, but one of the most beautiful rides I have ever taken. We did not meet a car or person on the entire way there and back, and went through absolutely devastated country, through ruined villages and woods full of skeletons of trees. Coucy, which is entirely ruined, and has no one living there, was like a city of the dead. It reminded me of Thebes.

With best love to all,  
Affectionately, Marian

Letter dated 1 December 1920

Hotel Palais Royale, Paris

Dec. 1st

I stopped at Morgan Harjes this a.m. and got Auntie's letter, written after she returned from New York, also one from Mary Smith. They were most welcome. I have not heard from Aunt Neilly for some time, has she been sick? It is too bad that Auntie's old enemy, bronchitis, attacked her as soon as she got back from the big city, but this only fulfills her proud boast that she never lets the germ escape her. Mrs. Elliott has had it also, and has been wretched ever since we came to Paris. His evening she seems much better.

We came up together on Monday evening, and have been busy ever since buying toys and Christmas presents at a large wholesale house, which would have rejoiced Eleanor's heart. We bought very nice things, and kept well under our allowance of three francs per child. We finished this afternoon about 3:30, and both feel quite tired mentally. Among other toys, we bought 200 dolls, which we are going to have dressed by the sewing classes in the different schools, and offer a prize for the best dressed one. Last week we found a little girl of about four, sitting among the ruins of their house, playing with a small piece of wood, which she had wrapped in an old soldier's gaiter, and was pretending it was a doll. She is going to be on the list of those who received dolls at Christmas.

After we finished the shopping Mrs. Elliott and I went to Molyneux, which is considered the most stylish dressmaker's in Paris now, and I ordered a blue serge dress, with Auntie's Christmas present. I think it is going to be very becoming, and I got Mrs. E. to help me select it, as you know I don't trust my own taste alone. I am getting a green evening dress from Katherine's dressmaker, it is very much the color of the one I had before I went in mourning. This makes three dresses and a separate black velvet skirt and over-blouse, which is all I will get before I come home. If there is anything with which either of you especially want, please let me know, otherwise I will bring handkerchiefs, scarves, gloves etc., and some wallets for the boys.

I got Katherine to get me tickets for *Le Retour*, which is considered the best play in Paris just now, and Mrs. E. and I went last evening. Katherine unfortunately could not go with us, as she had some other engagement. I took tea with her yesterday, and saw Henri, who leaves next week for his military service. He is trying to get into the aviation service, and Katherine is much upset she is sure he will be killed.

The play was splendid and we enjoyed it immensely. After a month in the country, the city life is a welcome change, although I would rather be in the country most of the time. I find the Paris climate very hard on my throat. Hester had the same experience. I think it is the intense dampness at this time of the year.

We lunched Today at a very quaint old restaurant, founded in 1780, called Boeuf à la Mode. We tried their famous dish and found it delicious. I have not eaten any snails yet, or frogs, but otherwise I like all of the French dishes.

I find that Mrs. Elliott and I get on very well together and I have come to know her much better in the three days in Paris than in two months at Blérancourt. She is rather shy, but, when she loses her shyness, very charming, and we have had an awfully good time together. We are returning to Blérancourt Tomorrow afternoon. Anne is coming up this evening to buy supplies for the *ouvroir* and will be here with us. I think she is probably going to stay up till Friday.

Tomorrow morning I am going to have my picture taken, and I have had my uniform dry-cleaned

Today, so that it will appear to advantage. I am going to the same place that Anne had hers taken with Poilu, and I hope it will turn out well. If it doesn't, I will not send any copy home.

I have not been able to see Ellen Newbold as she is not well and could not meet me anywhere to take lunch or tea, and I have not had the time to go to her hotel, which is near the Etoile. The telephone service in France, and especially Paris, is too awful for words, and it is very difficult to get anyone on the phone. If you do succeed in getting the connection, it is usually cut off in the middle of the conversation.

With much love for all,  
Affectionately, Marian

Give my best regards to Margaret

Letter dated 3 December 1920

Hôtel Palais Royale  
December 3rd

I changed my mind about sending some small Christmas presents home, and am taking a chance and sending them my registered mail today. If Auntie doesn't like hers, tell her to give them to Mrs. Walsh, but I hope she will like them, as they are the *dernier nouveauté* in Paris.

Anne came up on Wednesday evening and Mrs. Elliott returned to Blérancourt, very reluctantly, yesterday. Anne and I are going back this afternoon. I have finished all the errands I wanted to do, and am now starting out with Anne to visit a wholesale dry goods house to buy supplies for the *ouvroir*. After that we are going to have lunch with Katherine at a little restaurant in the Latin quarter and then buy a cake and take the 4:05 train home to Blérancourt.

I had a fitting for my dress at Molyneux yesterday, and it is going to be lovely. When I come to Paris again, the embroidery will be all finished and I will have the final fitting. I have also bought a skunk collar and cuffs (dyed *tête de nègre*) for my blue coat and K's dressmaker is putting them on for me.

I went to see Ellen Lee yesterday afternoon at tea time. She was awfully glad to see me, and I thought rather homesick. She gave me a copy of the Bulletin, which I have enjoyed immensely. It is forlorn to be as sick as she has felt for the last few months in a hotel so far from home. However she is much better now.

Last evening we took dinner at a restaurant called Le Griffon, and then went to the Variétés with K. and Mr. Ware to see *L'Ecole des Cocottes*. It was a splendidly produced piece, very French, and most amusing.

Today it is raining, and the streets are awfully muddy. Paris looks very gray and soft in the rain. The gray tiled roofs, gray chimney pots, and gray stone houses all blend together in the wet. This hotel is next to the Palais Royale in a very quaint old part of the city. There are little alleys and courtyards and covered arcades with little shops in them, going off in all directions. They allow dogs here, so we will probably stay here when we leave Blérancourt. Anne has not heard from Edith Farr yet about the exact date of her wedding, so we have not engaged a sailing yacht. I will let you know as soon as we do, so that you can make all your plans to meet us on the dock. I understand friends and families are no longer

allowed to see you when you got off the boat until you get to the customs house, which is a great bore. I must stop now and get ready to go out.

With best love to all,  
Affectionately, Marian

Letter dated 5 December 1920

Blérancourt  
December 5th

Since I returned from Paris, I have had quantities of mail, letters from both of you written on November 13, 14, 16, 17 and 21, also one from Aunt Neilly and Mary Smith.

I am enclosing the signed income receipt for the Fidelity Trust Co. I showed the Mayflower compact which you sent me to the English girls, and they were much interested in it. It was entirely strange to them, although they vaguely remembered reading in history about the Mayflower.

My galoshes arrived yesterday morning, and by a remarkable coincidence it was the first heavy rain we have had, and the mud was awful. I put them on immediately and went out to St. Paul to *marraine*. It was a soaking wet day, so after I had paid four visits, I went to see one of my particular friends, Mme. Raboeuf Nantier, who gave Kate and me some delicious hot coffee. She had one of the most beautiful yellow Angora cats that I have ever seen, named Mouton. It sat in my lap while I drank the coffee, and made Poilu fearfully jealous. Poilu decided he would go out to St. Paul with me, and insisted on following the car when I refused to take him in it. Consequently I made him run all the way there, then let him ride home.

I had an awfully busy day yesterday as I had to clear up all the store accounts, deliveries, etc., which had accumulated in my absence. I finally got through a little after six, and left my desk in lovely order.

Tilly had brought back two briochees from Compiègne in the morning, and we had high tea, which made a pleasant break in the afternoon. Anne and I got back from Paris on Friday afternoon. We had quite a hectic trip out as it was pouring, and we had three enormous bundles of materials for the *ouvroir*, as well as all of our own hand luggage, making nine pieces in all. When we arrived at Noyon the door of our compartment stuck and refused to open, a predicament I have long feared. We had to go out through the next door one, and I stood outside while Anne threw her things through the window. Finally the guard came along and got the door open just before the train started. We thought Anne would certainly be carried on to St. Quentin. Fortunately Dewhurst met us, and we got all of the stuff into the Dodge. Of course the rain made it rather difficult as we were trying to hold umbrellas over our best Paris hats while disembarking.

I bought a circular lace veil to wear with my brown hat which makes it very dressy. I have just read in the daily Mail that the Queen of Spain has ordered three dresses at Molyneux, and I feel quite bucked up over my one. Tell H. Semple the kind of dressmaker I patronize.

With love to all, Marian

Letter dated 9 December 1920

Blérancourt  
December 9th

Your letter written on Thanksgiving day came yesterday and I read your menu aloud to Anne. We both decided we could hardly bear it. The thought of a big turkey with American dressing and cranberries was too much. I hope the committee appreciate what fine service Anne and I are going giving it, but I am afraid you appreciate us more than they do. Still, they say they are unable to fill our places when we leave, so we hope they will at least miss us.

The weather has become very wintry now. It is as cold as it usually gets here, between 20 and 40 most of the time. We have had a week of cloudy weather, interspersed with rain and little snow flurries. It is rather foggy at night and very damp. Our stoves keep our *baraques* very comfortable, and we have large pitchers of hot water both night and morning, so you can see that we are very comfortable.

Today, about eleven o'clock, a large number of shells were exploded at Trosly Loire, a village about five miles away. It sounded like a bombardment, and continued at about thirty-second intervals for twenty minutes, and shook all of our buildings. It was very easy to imagine what the real bombardment during the war was like.

Agnes Doren, our Texan, left yesterday for home, Austin, where she is going to be married to a rising young real estate broker. I think she will be more missed than regretted, as it is very quiet since she left. We gave her a farewell party the night before she left, and all dressed up to represent the children in the different schools where she has taught physical culture classes. We kept the whole thing a secret, and after she came into the living room, we all trooped in, to the music of the gramophone. We added champagne and cake to our usual supper, and played charades afterwards. It went off very well and Doran was delighted with the evening. We presented her with six plate doilies, made of Point de Paris lace, which represented six of the fables of La Fontaine. They were really exquisite, but I can't picture them in her bungalow in Austin, Texas. She had no idea of what La Fontaine's fables were, but was awfully pleased at the present from the committee. I tied the doilies up with white ribbon, and put a tiny wax angel, which we made a bow and arrow for, on top of the box. It looked quite like Cupid, and everyone, except Mrs. Elliott and me who had bought it, from a crèche, in the village, thought that it was Cupid. The *magasin* is going to be closed the first of the year, and I have to wind up everything in connection with it before I leave. There are small stores now in many of the villages that we do not think we ought to undersell them.

Would love to all,  
Affectionately, Marian

Letter dated 12 December 1920

Blérancourt  
December 12th

So many exciting things have happened since I last wrote on Thursday that I hardly know where to begin to tell you about them. The fire is the most important so I will start with that. As I have written to you, fire is the great bug-bear in Blérancourt, and we live in constant expectation of one, as we have lamps in our bedrooms, and stoves. You can imagine the risk is rather great and the insurance rates correspondingly high. There have already been two fires, and we felt sure there would be a third, so when the *garde meuble* caught fire and burned to the ground on Friday night, we were rather expecting

it.

On Friday afternoon the temperature started to drop, and so all of our water was turned off at six o'clock to prevent the pipes from freezing. Anne and I spent the evening in her room, reading and knitting stockings, and at 10:40 started to get ready for bed. I had just taken off everything except my union suit and was filling my basin to take a hot sponge bath when I heard Heitcamp, the girl who is on the other side of Anne, open her window, and immediately give a scream of "my God, the *garde meuble* is on fire!" I rushed to my window and looked out at the *garde meuble*, which is opposite our *baragues*, and the flames were just starting to lick up one corner of the building. We hurriedly threw some clothes on and rushed out to call the others, most of whom were asleep in bed.

Everyone dressed quickly, and after shutting all of the dogs up and putting out our lamps, we ran over to the fire. It had gained such headway that we knew nothing could be done to save the building, and so we put all of our thought on saving the *magasin*, which almost touches it, and which is connected with our offices. If that caught there was no hope of saving any of our buildings.

By this time the *mechaniciens* from the atelier were there with the ladder, and the men from the village were forming a chain line to bring water from the village fountain, about a city block away. Our water was turned off and cock frozen, so we could not get it turned on until the fire was almost over. I will draw you a plan of our buildings so that you can picture the scene. [Marian has drawn a diagram here.]

We did not think there was a chance of saving the *magasin* and offices, so emptied the entire building onto the lawn where I have marked an X. Mrs. Elliott stationed me at the entrance gate to prevent the crowd from coming in and also to guard the safe, which eight men staggered out with and put in the road. It was a responsible position, but not as exciting or as warm as those nearer the fire. The men kept the end of the *magasin* which is nearest to the *garde meuble* soaked with water and our hand fire extinguishers, and although it caught over and over again, they always managed to put it out, and by spreading wet blankets on the roof, saved the building.

The wind was very high, but fortunately blowing somewhat away from the *magasin*, otherwise I think nothing in human power could have saved it. The *garde meuble* was packed to the doors with furniture and supplies of all kinds. I had spent all day Friday unloading a railroad car (not personally, but superintending it) and among the rest of the shipment were twenty-four cases of powdered milk for the babies, which had just arrived from America. Each case was worth 500 francs. We had also gotten a lot of things from the Préfecture on Monday, amounting to 30,000 francs. The building and all the contents are an absolute loss, and will amount to 100,000 francs, more or less, 63,000 of which is covered with insurance.

The fire started at five minutes of eleven, and by two was beginning to die down. It burned very slowly at the end because it was consuming a quantity of mattresses and woolen blankets. The walls smelt terribly while it burned, and the canned milk (not the milk powder) kept exploding at intervals all through the fire. By 2:30 all danger was over, so we went into my room, which was the only one with the bed still made, and made a huge pot of cocoa to warm ourselves, as by that time we were frightfully cold. The temperature was about 18, but either due to the excitement or the cocoa none of us got sick. We put a guard of four men over the ruins, which continued to burn at intervals all night, and retired for the second time, only this time in spite of being exhausted we were too excited to sleep, so when we met at breakfast the next morning we were rather a sad looking bunch.

We had breakfast at Mrs. Dike's house, as our dining room and kitchen were completely dismantled,

and after breakfast we spent the rest of the morning and most of the afternoon putting back the furniture and office papers which we had removed the night before. I have never imagined such a hopeless mess in my life. Dewhurst and Kate Lewis were up in Paris that night so we used their rooms to store the things from the store in, and they were piled high with every kind of clothing.

Our costumes during the fire were awfully funny, and if we had had time we would have been fearfully amused at our looks. Anne had on flannel pajamas under her uniform and overcoat; Tilly pulled on long rubber boots and put a bathrobe, made I think by the Navajo Indians, on over her night clothes. Mlle. de la Battut had her hair braided into very long plaits which flew out behind her in the wind. Our directrice had hastily put on a pair of fleece-lined leather shoes, like the Eskimo wear, and her fur-lined overcoat, but had forgotten that her hair was up in curl papers. I was somewhat sketchily clad underneath, but on top I had my tweed overcoat and my heavy gloves, which hid all deficiencies in my costume.

I kept wondering if the fire spread and our *baraque* burned, what I would try to save out of my room. Luckily I did not have to decide. Some very funny things happened during the fire. Of course some of the people who were helping us completely lost their heads. One man jerked out power to our two telephones and threw them on the grass. We have not been able to get it mended, so are cut off from everyone. Another man made endless trips out, bringing a few china plates on each trip, which he carefully stacked up on the lawn. The county judge, an elderly man with a flowing white beard, rushed out with a brass shell pots, full of chrysanthemums, and tripped and fell into one of the cesspools, which had had the cover taken off and had been filled with straw. They say his language was both eloquent and expressive. The maids all were reduced to tears by the excitement, and one of them got so hysterical that I had to give her aromatic spirits of ammonia to quiet her.

I feel terribly about this fire, because I have been in charge of the *garde meuble* ever since I arrived and was responsible for the contents. Fortunately we know how the fire started, and it was unavoidable for me. The room which adjoins the *garde meuble* is occupied by two chauffeurs who drive two of the big trucks. One of them, Adrien, had gone down to the village and left his lamp burning, and a three-month-old puppy in the room. The puppy must have gotten on the table and upset the lamp into a box of cartridges which was under the table, because we heard the noise of the exploding cartridges just before we saw the flames. Altogether the night of the fire was a hideous one, and one that I should not want to duplicate. Mrs. Dike and the insurance man are coming down tomorrow, and Mrs. Elliott and I have been very busy making up an approximate list of the contents of the *garde meuble*.

The next exciting piece of news is that Anne heard today from her cousin Edith Farr, but she has set the day of her wedding for January 22nd, as Aunt Kate told her Anne would be back on the 15th. Anne was quite upset as she had had no intention of sailing until about the 25th. Her time here is not up till the 12th and she wanted about a week in Paris to do some sightseeing and shopping before she sailed. This means that in order to get home with a few days margin, she will have to try and get passage about January 8 and will have to leave here on the fourth. I do not see how I can possibly come with her, as I will be needed here about the insurance and winding up the affairs of the *magasin*. If she could only wait until the end of the month, I could manage it, but since the fire, I do not feel that I would be doing the square thing by the committee or Mrs. Elliott to leave in the middle of what cannot fail to be a very busy and complicated time. It would throw all of the work on to Mrs. Elliott, and she does not know the contents of the *garde meuble* as well as I do, and consequently it would be very hard on her. Also Anne's leaving leaves her with no sous-directrice, and she will have to do that work too. I think, if you two agree with me, that I ought to stay here and get the things settled before I leave, and get a sailing the 1st of February. I am afraid that if I did what I want to, and come with Anne, I will regret it as I will



always feel that I left when I ought to have stayed. What do you think about it? Talk it over with George, and send me a cable saying either "stay" or use the codeword "business." In that case I will come back with Anne. If I don't cross with her, I will come with some of the other members of the committee.

With a great deal of love for each one of you,  
Affectionately, Marian

Letter dated 15 December 1920

Blérancourt  
December 15th

I got your letters written on November 28 this morning, and am enclosing the paper about the estate, signed. The clipping about the fire was almost too much for my nerves after our fire. When I read the heading "20 head of cattle lost in barn fire," I thought at first it was our barn. I am not surprised at the Berkey-March row. Someday March will kill someone while he is drunk. He is a most unfortunate neighbor, but he will probably move on this April. It was great of Auntie to invest that money for each of us and I appreciate her doing it very much.

Anne went up to Paris today and secured her passage home on the *France* on January 8th, due about the 15th. It was almost more than I could bear to let her go without me and engage her passage. It really is one of the hardest decisions I have ever had to make, to stay over here and let Anne return without me. And of course I can't let anyone here know how hard it is, as I have to appear to be doing it cheerfully. So writing to you is my only safety-valve. However I know I am doing the right thing in waiting, so that is some comfort. I expect now that everything will be settled up and I will be entirely free on February 1st, and then I will leave. It certainly was very bad luck for me to have the fire now, after I had seen Mrs. Dike last month and got her permission to leave with Anne, and now to feel morally bound to stay. The insurance people are already beginning to dispute our claim, and I am afraid we are going to have trouble to collect the insurance, but I hope for the best. Perhaps we will get part of it in any case.

I went up to Paris yesterday with Mrs. Elliott, just for the day, to finish up the Christmas shopping for the committee. We went up on the 8:30 and came back on the 6:30. It reminded me of our days in town when we are at Springton. It was quite exhausting, but we got through everything, and it was easier than going for the night.

I spent this afternoon taking dolls around to the various schools in our villages. The older girls are going to dress them, and we have offered a prize in each school for the best dressed doll. I tried to get some pretty Christmas cards in Paris, but failed entirely, so I am sending Blérancourt postals to my various friends. Perhaps they will be more unusual anyhow. I hope to hear in your next letter of the arrival of Gay's baby.

With lots of love for all of you,  
Affectionately, Marian

As I can't get back till the middle of February I wish you two would take a trip south.

Letter dated 19 December 1920

Blérancourt  
December 19th

Aunt's letter of the first reach me yesterday, and I was elated to get the pictures of both of you. Aunt's is splendid, and it is so nice to have one without the long veil. Eleanor's is "not so good," as her eyes are too white. But I am much pleased to have both of them. My pictures are finished and I am mailing you three, in different positions. Anne does not think they look like me, but I must have looked like that to the camera as all three look alike. I must admit that I appear to have dark hair and eyes in the pictures, but the uniform took very well, and in a few years no one will remember whether the picture was a very good likeness or not. I hope you will like them.

I have had a terribly busy week, first taking stock of the ruins of the *garde meuble*, and trying to make out an accurate list for the insurance man from memory, and second, making an inventory of the contents of the *magasin*. I do not think we lost anything during the fire from the store, which is quite remarkable when you consider that we moved most of the contents of the store over to our *baraque* and then back again. I had four people helping to take stock and now I am making up the inventory with the prices.

As soon as Christmas and our numerous parties for the children are over, we are going to have a three-day sale and close out everything we can. Also I am going to have a fire sale of the remains of the *garde meuble*. A few of the iron pots and some of the stoves did not burn and we may be able to sell them at reduced rates. A good many of the things have been stolen from the ruins at night, although we have a night watchman now, and so many dogs, they have pilfered quite successfully. Do you remember the fire sale in the "Auctioneer"? My goods do not need to be either smoked or soaked, as both have already been done. The insurance men have been here several times and now say they will not be back again until January 4th, which is the day Anne leaves, so I see that it is more and more impossible for me to get away until all these various affairs are straightened out and settled. She hates the idea of crossing alone as much as I dislike having to stay without her, but we both realize it is the only thing to do. As Aunt would say, "man proposes but God disposes." This fire was a contingency which I had never anticipated in making my plans to leave the committee. However I am sure in the future I should always regret it if I did not stay and help Mrs. Elliott at this crisis.

Mrs. Dike came down from Paris yesterday to see the remains of the fire, and thought it a miracle that we had saved any of our buildings, which it really was. She is coming down for Christmas, also Mrs. Tracy. They will both attend our Christmas dinner, and help to eat the goose.

I went into Compiègne yesterday morning with Tilly to do some shopping for the committee, and on the way back we came through a little village which had the most beautiful old château in a large park, just on the outskirts of the village. The park was surrounded by a gray stone wall, overgrown with ivy, and had wonderful old trees in it. Of course the wall had been badly shelled and was partly in ruins. The château was built of red and black brick, with two round towers at the ends, each one surmounted by a battlement with a wall of Troy edging. The château had a moat around it, and an arched bridge leading out into the garden at the rear. It belonged to the Prince de Plessis but has not been lived in since the war. The château itself is not much injured from what we could see.

We are trying to get a Christmas tree for the foyer, but Norway Spruce are very scarce in this part of France, and we will probably have to use a pine instead.

I hope George is not having too much work with the farm accounts. I really feel that I ought to be home to take them back again, and balance them up at the end of the year. I only cut Auntie's coupons and fixed the envelopes up to December 1st, but the other envelopes are in the drawer of Father's safe. Several of our insurance policies fall due in February, but I suppose Curtin and Brockie will notify you in time. I know the Dodge insurance expires then. Eleanor will have to take out the new policies and the license in her name, as I am not there to sign. It really does not make much difference whose name it is in.

I hope the new chauffeur is continuing to prove satisfactory. I do not see how he and his wife and four children can possibly fit into two rooms, but of course over here, where the living standard is not so high, families of eight live in two rooms, and even take a couple of borders. The French peasant lives in a way that our American working people would not think possible. The houses are one story with two rooms and a loft, which is used as a hay mow, also for storing grain, etc. The rooms rarely have more than one window, which has panes of vitrex, yellow paper with an oiled surface. This admits almost no light. The stone walls make the house very damp, and all of the old people are rheumatic. Just outside of the front door is the menore pile, and at one side the stable, chicken and rabbit houses. I will send you a Christmas cable on Thursday.

Affectionately, Marian

Letter dated 23 December 1920

Blérancourt  
December 23rd

I cannot remember when I last wrote, but I think it was on Sunday. We have been so busy all week with Christmas preparations that I have been so mentally tired by evening I have done nothing. There has been a rehearsal of the Christmas play every evening since Saturday, and in a weak moment I consented to be one of the two stage managers, so I spend my evenings in the foyer rehearsing. Heitkamp, the girl who is in charge of the play, is a very vague artistic soul, whose whole mind is on the effect of the chorus singing and who cares nothing for the hundred petty details which make up a successful play. Consequently Mrs. Elliott and I have had to do all that part.

I spent yesterday in Compiègne and stayed in to lunch, as I did not get through with the shopping in the morning. The stores are closed from 12 to 2, and we are an hour from Compiègne in the car, so we have to make a very early start in the morning in order to get any time there before twelve. Maynard and I lunched at the Palais Hotel, a little hotel built on the edge of the park belonging to the Palace. We had a very good lunch, although the hotel is not very impressive looking, and suffered very much in the bombardment. We have had a thaw for the past two days, and it really was a welcome change after the awful cold spell. I used to get up in the morning and break a cake of ice off my water pitcher, then melt my frozen washcloth over the stove.

I went out to St. Paul today and distributed presents of sugar to all the old people, whom I have got to knowing well. I used the sugar I brought over with me and tied it up in little bags with red ribbon. Tomorrow we are going to decorate our living *baraque* with ivy, holly and mistletoe, which Dewhurst and one of the chauffeurs got in the forest today. On Christmas we are having a dinner of twenty; we have included some of the odd people from the Paris office who had no place to go. I have been writing some poetry to go with the favors for the dinner. You know the kind Father used to write. These verses are much like his, but not so good.

I got your letter of December 5th today, also one from Aunt Sita, Emmie Brazier and George. Also one addressed to Mrs. H. W. B. [Aunt Kate], which I returned to Morgan Harjes. I suppose they are her bankers too. Anne has had a very bad stiff neck for the last two days and is feeling quite wretchedly. She leaves a week from Tuesday. It seems very near now. I am going up to Paris with her for the night and will have a farewell dinner and theatre together. I can't begin to close out the *magasin* until after January 4th on account of the insurance.

With best love and wishes for the New Year,  
From Marian

Letter dated 26 December 1920

Blérancourt  
December 26th

I got a lot of mail from home on the 24th, Eleanor's letter enclosing the second set of pictures and letters from George, Maisie, Aunte Ellen, Aunt Sita, and Charlotte Earle. Our friends in New York seem to all have daughters this year. I really think Gay is lucky to have another girl, two have such an awfully good time together, but I suppose she is disappointed is not a boy.

We have had a very busy and gay Christmas here, and the goose, or rather geese, for we had two, were delicious; they taste very much like duck. I missed eating that Cement turkey very much, but Christmas in what Anne calls the "Region" is so entirely different from Christmas at home that I was not a bit homesick.

We began our celebrations by attending a midnight mass in the village church. It is built like all of the churches over here, on a hill at the edge of the village. It was full moon, and the street was as bright as day when we walked up there. The service was short and really beautiful, as the choir chanted some old Breton carols, and the Christmas mass. It was a very mild night, which was fortunate, as of course the church was not heated.

Afterwards we came back and had a late supper consisting of raw oysters, Claret, and crackers and Brie cheese. On Christmas morning Dewhurst and I went for a cross-country walk, so as to have a good appetite for the dinner. Anne was still suffering from her stiff neck (which I think is rheumatism as she now has it in her knee as well) so did not come with us. After lunch we played bridge and improvised some costumes for the fancy dress dinner in the evening. Our best form of diversion is dressing up, because we get rather tired of our uniforms. Some of the costumes were very clever, and considering that we have nothing but the *magasin* and our own trunks to draw on, they were really very good. Maynard went as a gypsy, with ten-centime pieces as earrings. Dewhurst wore her Pierrot costume. Kate was an Apache. Anne and I got very short red Alsatian skirts, full black sateen bloomers, wait waists with flowing red ties, and a black sateen bodices, and tied red flowered bandanna handkerchiefs over our hair. They made quite effective costumes, and we were called the lady pirates. I made my eyebrows black with burnt cork, as that disguises me more than anything else.

We decorated the table with holly and ivy and had a little Christmas tree in the middle with lighted candles on it. Just before dinner was announced, Mrs. Elliott, Tracy and Tilly came in dressed as the three wise men, each carrying a milk can, labeled gold, frankincense and myrrh. They wore peignoirs (from the store), cretonne table covers for head veils, and had long flowing beards made of absorbent

cotton. Orchibeouf dressed up in one of Tilly's old uniforms and took her off splendidly. He had bought some curly black hair in Compiègne, and imitated her walk and laugh awfully well. He carried Madelon, her dog, around with him. Mrs. Dike wore a feather costume she had brought down from Paris with her. I think it was meant to represent Gaby Deslys. She seemed much amused at the favors and verses, and enjoyed herself immensely. I am enclosing my dinner card for you. Mrs. Elliott wrote the verse, and gave me a tiny wooden armoire, just like the eight Préfecture ones which were burned in the fire. Anne got a little dog that hopped when you squeeze the ball, marked Mme. Poilu; Maynard, who is always consulting her barometer, a compass; Kate Lewis, as head of our imaginary club, the Our Hour Culture Club, a small copy of La Fontaine's poetry; Tracy, who is a judge at the New York dog show, five little dogs, marked "Blérancourt Bench and Kennel Show"; Tilly, who always keeps four or five kinds of liqueurs in her room, a bottle labeled "crème de Madelon." We gave Mrs. Dike a little fireman who climbed a ladder when wound up.

Today we have done nothing much except get ready for the children's party tomorrow, filled candy bags, decorated the foyer, and had a rehearsal of the play. I am going to bed early, as I have been up awfully late for the past two nights. I am enclosing a New Year card for Bobs. Send me his neck size, as I want to bring him a new French collar and leash (a leader, English girls call it) as a present.

With best love,  
Affectionately, Marian

I decorated my pictures with holly the day before Christmas.

Letter dated 1 January 1921

Blérancourt  
New Year's Day

I did not get a cable from you at Christmas, so I know the one you sent has been delayed or lost. I hope you got mine, which I sent on the 22nd. This does not seem at all like New Year's Day at home. The weather is still mild, and it rains almost every night and part of the day. I think the rainy season has begun, and the country really needs it, as there was no rain at all from the time I arrived till the end of November, just day after day of clear, crisp weather. It was a curious coincidence that my galoshes arrived just when they did, as the mud has been deep ever since, and up to that time I had not needed them at all.

We have had a very busy week, with Christmas parties for the children from the villages in our foyer. We had three parties with about 350 children at each one. Tilly dressed up as Père Noël, and some of the children were delighted and shrieked with joy at the sight, others were scared and wept for fear they might have to shake hands with her.

With some difficulty we found a Christmas tree in the forest of Compiègne, which we bought and trimmed with quantities of tinsel and candles, etc. The best tree ornaments were made in Germany before the war; consequently the selection in the Paris shops was not very large. Two of us stood guard over the tree all the time the candles were lighted, armed with wet cloths tied on the end of long sticks to put out any candle which did not burn in the proper manner. The rest of us distributed the toys, cakes, candy and oranges. The parties went off very well, and were great fun, although quite strenuous. We were all rather relieved when they were over.

On Thursday evening we had intended to have our Christmas play, but Mrs. Dike decided to change it to Sunday, at the last minute, and have Mr. Tardieu make a speech instead to all the *maires* and heads of the *syndicats*. So he came down with two other men, one of them the head of the Aisne Préfecture, and made a splendid speech, the kind of Congressman Butler makes to the farmers of the Chester County. He first got them worked up by telling them how much their province had suffered in the war, then of its marvelous recuperative powers, and finally, when he had them purring like satisfied cats, he told them that they must help France still further by subscribing to the new loan. There was a good deal more about politics, but that was the general theme.

Mrs. Dike had brought down a couple of musical artists to help the evening along and they performed before and after the speech. They sang the very latest and gayest French songs, and danced. Afterwards the speakers and the artists came up to the committee and they sang some more, and we had some champagne to cheer things along. Mr. T. is great fun and enjoys everything immensely.

I went out as escort on one of the camions which went to the different villages to collect the *syndicats* and *maires*, and they gave me a new driver who was just down for Christmas week. He did not know any of the roads, and had only oil lamps on his car. I kept wondering what would happen if I got lost, because I had only been to three of the villages once, and by daylight, and never to the other three. Fortunately we did not get lost, and arrived back in Blérancourt twenty minutes before the meeting began.

Kate, Dewhurst and I, who had been out on the three camions, had a late dinner, and then went down to the foyer, and by going in a side entrance were able to get seats up in front. We had decorated the stage with flags, and branches of evergreens, to cover all deficiencies, and it looked rather like Burnham Wood, as the branches were a little unsteady and kept threatening to fall on Mrs. Dike. She did not notice it, but the rest of us were very nervous.

Yesterday we took toys out to the little children under five, and the babies, who were all too small to come to the parties. I had seventeen babies in St. Paul under eighteen months. My godchild is improving in appearance, but I fear will never be fine-looking, or even, as Aunt Neilly now would say, interesting.

This morning Anne, Dewhurst and I took one of our favorite cross-country walks with the dogs. I certainly will miss Anne and Poilu when they go. Dewhurst is not going on leave until February, so we can continue our walks till I leave.

This afternoon all the important people of the village came to call, to wish us "Bonne Année." I hope the committee will get through 1921 without a fire. There were two in 1920. I wonder if there will be as many changes in our family in 1920 as in 1920.

Affectionately, Marian

Letter dated 4 January 1921

Blérancourt  
January 4th

I have not had any letter since two days before Christmas, so today I got worried and send you a cable. I know you have written but perhaps the rush of mail at Christmas time has delayed them.

Anne left for Paris this morning on the 8:50, accompanied by Poilu and a great deal of luggage. She said she had practically nothing to pack, but when she began, she found her steamer trunk entirely inadequate, and after our united efforts had forced it to close, she had to borrow my steamer roll to put the rest of her belongings in. Poilu was most amusing during the packing. Like all dogs, he sensed something unusual about noon and began to get restless, then when Anne pulled her trunk out from under the bed and commenced packing, he got up and left the room, came to my room, and stayed until after 11 p.m. At that hour he decided she should have finished and he returned to her room. Dewhurst and I took them over to the station, and took Peppy along to say goodbye to Poilu. He was so excited when the train came in that he could hardly climb up into the compartment.

Tomorrow morning I am going up to Paris with Dewhurst and will stay until Friday. She comes back on Thursday and Kate Lewis comes up to take her place in our room. We have a double room *and bath* at the Hotel Wagram, on the rue de Rivoli. I never seem to stay at the same hotel when I am in Paris, which looks as if I didn't pay my bill at the previous one.

Kate has not been well, and is going *en permission* until March or April, then if she feels well enough will come back to the committee and stay through the summer. I do not know if the life of a chauffeur is too strenuous for her, or if it is the cold weather, but she has been wretched for over a month and is going to the south of France for a rest. As you know, I like cold weather, so it just suits me here.

I don't think I ever told you about the lovely Christmas box that Hester sent us. She got Katherine to buy the things in Paris and ship the box to us the day before Christmas. It had a large plum pudding, a loaf of nut cake, a fruitcake, every kind of nuts, preserved fruits, and candy. We kept it till the Tuesday after Christmas and then had a select supper of six in Dewhurst's room, which is the largest. We bought two chickens in St. Paul and got Mme. Quillet, the cook, to roast them for us, then we made apple and celery salad with mayonnaise, and hard sauce for the pudding, which Anne boiled on her stove. It was a delicious meal and we thoroughly enjoyed it. It certainly was nice of Hester to send us the box. I think she probably saw when she was here that food was the thing we got the most excited over.

The insurance man spent the entire day here, poking about in the ruins. I think we are going to get about 63,000 francs of insurance, which will be fine.

Best love to all, Marian

Letter dated 6 January 1921

Hotel Wagram, Paris  
January 6th

Dewhurst and I came up to Paris yesterday morning and have had a very busy and delightful visit. This afternoon she went back, and I am waiting for Kate to arrive and then we will have dinner together. Yesterday morning we started for the train very early, as there was a great variety of time in our watches, and it was a good thing we did, for halfway to Noyon we had a puncture. The tire was rusted fast to the rim, and we worked at terrific speed and succeeded in making the train with six minutes to spare.

When we reached Paris we got a very nice room in this hotel, and then went up to the office to report to Mrs. Tracy. After lunch I moved my trunk here from the Palais Royale and then went to the

dressmaker's for a fitting. My two dresses are lovely and all finished. I will leave them there until I bring my Innovation trunk up to Paris next month. I bought two baby dresses, a petticoat and cap for Maisie, and some handkerchiefs for all of us. Tomorrow I am going to the Bon Marché to get Auntie some gloves.

In the evening we went to dinner at Katherine's, and afterwards to the Casino de Paris to see a *révue* called "Paris qui jazz." The theatre was my party, and it was a wonderful show, but unfortunately the police had made them cut some parts the week before. However quite enough was left to make it interesting. I have never seen more gorgeous costumes or scenery. The French *révues* can give us a great many points in detail of production. One of the scenes had girls dressed up as different kinds of laces, Chantilly, Valenciennes, Cluny, etc.; another was all of the favorite perfumes. There was the usual *comère* and *compère*, who walked through the different scenes, explaining them.

This morning I paid a visit to three steamship offices, and think I have secured a passage on the *Rotterdam* of the Holland America line, sailing February 12th from Boulogne. Henry and Hester liked it so much that I am sure it is a good boat. I will send you a cable as soon as I know definitely. I certainly will be glad to get back home again. It seems ages since I left you in Bay Head.

Anne took lunch with us at Le Griffon, and afterward she and I went to the hairdresser's, and then did a little shopping, and ended up at the Hotel Imperiale, where we had tea with Mrs. Tracy. She had asked us several times and we have never gone. We had a very nice time, as Mrs. Tracy is much better as a social light than as a businesswoman in the office. She is very anxious for and Kate to come back and take her place, as she finds the position very wearing.

Best love to all, Marian

Letter dated 9 January 1921

Blérancourt (Aisne)  
Sunday, January 9th

I have had five letters since I last wrote to you from Paris, so my mind is greatly relieved. Evidently the mail was held up somewhere. I also got your answer to my cable yesterday. So altogether I feel greatly cheered.

I have secured a state room on the *Rotterdam* of the Holland America line, sailing on February 12th from Boulogne, and due at Hoboken about the 19th. I will send you a cable with the name of the ship tomorrow. She has a reputation of being the steadiest boat afloat, and I certainly hope she lives up to it, as it is not apt to be smooth at the time of the year. However I do not dread the trip, since I have discovered the efficacy of Mothersills.

I last wrote to you while waiting for Kate Lewis to arrive at the Wagram. She turned up with all of her baggage at 8:30 and we had dinner together; then we went over to the France and Choiseul to call on Florence Lowden, Gov. Lowden's daughter, who was staying there with her aunt. Kate knew her very well in Springfield. The aunt, Mrs. Envers, after telling Kate how badly she looked, and that she evidently needed a complete change, turned to me and said, "living in the devastated region seems to suit you perfectly, you look splendidly." I tried to tell her I had lost weight steadily, but she would not listen.



On Friday morning I went over to the Bon Marché and bought both of you some gloves, just the ones you asked for in your letter, which I got the next day. Gloves are cheaper here than at home, considering the present rate of exchange. If it were not for the bother of our Custom House I would like to bring back much more.

Anne and I took lunch with Kate at Columbin's, and while we were eating Anna Ingersoll got up from a nearby table and came over and joined us. I did not know her at first. She looks very badly and much older. She is over on a scholarship from the Academy of Fine Arts and is living with three other girls in a studio apartment in the Latin quarter. How Father would have hated these modern independent young women. For that matter he probably would not have let me come over with the committee, although I am most carefully chaperoned and looked out for in every way. The committee has a very good system which takes care of you, without worrying with red tape, etc. Of course all their workers are very carefully picked, and can look out for themselves pretty well.

I saw Mrs. Dike yesterday and told her what I expected to sail. She did her best to persuade me to stay over indefinitely, but I assured her I was needed home. She is coming over in March for two months to attend the annual meeting of the committee in New York the first of April. She apparently expects Aunt Kate back again to take charge of the personnel in April, but neither Anne or I have heard that she is coming. I think that at present she is taking Ms. Caldwell's place in the New York office.

I got a letter from Anne at lunch today, mailed from the steamer. She had a large state room, and could keep Poilu in it with her if she wanted to. Poilu was delighted to see me in Paris, and made a great fuss over me. He was quite fascinated with Katherine's Siamese cat, and wanted to play with her, but the cat was rather afraid of him, due to his enormous size, I think, as he is very gentle. She used to try and play with his tail when he was asleep, but always woke up instantly.

After lunch on Friday I went over to Katherine's with Anne and helped her to get her trunks off to the Gare St. Lazare, then I took the 4:05 back to Blérancourt. Dewhurst met me at the station. It seemed quite lonely at first without either Anne or Kate, but after the first night I have been too busy to miss them much.

Next week I am going to hold a three-day sale of all the stock remains in the *magasin* and then close up the accounts. The insurance men have finally given us permission to sell out.

Last evening we had a cinema in the foyer of the committee's work. All of the other centers came, and we had hot chocolate and cake afterwards. I am in two of the films.

Affectionately, Marian

Letter dated 13 January 1921

Blérancourt  
January 13th

I have just returned from a trip which would have made Father say even more strongly, "a woman's place is in the home." This evening at supper, we heard that the hospital car had broken down and that a car had to go out and bring a man who had broken three of his ribs. Maynard is driving our ambulance, so she was sent and I went with her to help find the place. We found a man on a farm about ten miles from here, and he turned out to be a Spaniard, speaking no French. He was sitting with a half dozen

friends in a canteen, all drinking and toasting his trip to the hospital. We had to leave the car on the main road, as the mud was about ten inches deep, and walk into the farm by the feeble light of a lantern we had thoughtfully borrowed as we started.

The canteen was dimly lighted with a kerosene torch, and the men were sitting on benches around a rough table. It looked exactly like the conspirators' scene in any opera, where the villain plans to murder the hero. The man was able to sit up going back to the hospital, but I am afraid he had a very painful trip as the road was much like a Wallace Township one.

I have had a terribly busy week, with the closing out sale in the *magasin*. It ended today, and I am really very glad it is over, as it has been quite exhausting. I divided the different villages and let about five come each day, and this afternoon I let the people of Blérancourt come. The result was a howling mob outside the doors, and I finally had to get the *garde champetre* to keep order and let the women in a few at a time. Woolworth and Co.'s best advertised bargain day could not have surpassed mine. The store is now closed for good, and I am going to make up the final accounts now and then finish up the inventory. I have been made sous-directrice since Anne left and next week will be in charge as Mrs. Elliott and Tracy, our secretary and treasurer, are both going away. I see what Ms. Caldwell meant when she told me that the workers were most valuable to the committee just about the time their six months was up, and they laughed, because it really does take you almost that long to become thoroughly familiar with the work. I know in my own case that this is so.

The weather here continues mild and the farmers are plowing everywhere. Some little Michelmas Daisy's are blooming in our border along the path. We do not see the sun most of the time, but the weather is gray, a good deal of rain, and awfully mild for this time of the year. I am getting so impatient to come home since I got my passage that counting the days. It will be wonderful to see all of you again. I am sorry my boat docks in Hoboken, but don't let that discourage you from meeting me.

With lots of love to all,  
Affectionately, Marian

Letter dated 17 January 1921

Blérancourt  
January 17th

Not very much of interest has happened since I wrote last Thursday, but I will send you a few lines just the same. I went over to Laon today to the Préfecture to take the money from the store and also to return some other things which were left after the sale. As the store is closed now, we are no longer agents for the Préfecture. We also took a young woman from Vassens with us. She wanted to go to the Palace de Justice to apply for a divorce. She has three children, each with a different father, and her husband, who is the father of the last baby, has deserted her, and she is applying for divorce on the grounds of desertion and non-support. Personally I should think the husband would be the one to get it.

It has turned very cold again, and the trip over was extremely cold. Coming back was a little better as we were going with the wind. Dewhurst took me over, and we had lunch together at the little hotel built on the ramparts. This afternoon Mrs. Elliott and Tracy went to Paris. They will be away till Saturday, and I am acting as directrice! ably assisted by Tracy, but she goes off on Wednesday and then I will be alone. I hope we don't have any more fires while I am in charge. I really think it is nicer to be sous-directrice than directrice, as you have all the fun without the responsibility. However I can try my

wings for a few days. And Kate will be pleased to hear how I have risen in the world.

I am taking care of Madelon, the little Sealyngnam terrier, while Tilly is away, and at present she is asleep in her basket near my stove. She is a cute little dog who is either is good as gold or a perfect devil. She knows no halfway course. On Saturday she ran after the car when I was going up to St. Paul and I took her in, out of kindness. She rewarded me by chasing a large white rooster, twice her size, at the first house I was visiting, and she pulled his whole tail out before I could catch her. The yard was strewn with white feathers, and it cost me five francs to soothe the irate owner. When Tilly left today she [Madelon] sobbed and kissed her suitcase, and all evening she has been in my lap, making love to me. Kate Lewis is now in Nice, and the doctor tells her she must stay in the south and rest. Maynard leaves for the Riviera tomorrow for a two-week trip with her mother, and when she gets back to Dewhurst goes to England for her leave. I suppose Anne landed yesterday. I have been thinking of her being with her family today.

My dresses are all finished and waiting for me in Paris now. I think I will buy a straw hat before I leave if I can find a becoming one. I am beginning to think longingly of coming back. It is less than a month now before I sail and in a month I will be home!! Tell Maisie I still have resisted the cigarette habit although surrounded by constant smokers.

With best love to each one of you,  
Affectionately, Marian

Letter dated 21 January 1921

Blérancourt  
January 21th

Your letter of January 3rd arrived this morning and I am so sorry that my letter written just after the fire never reached you. I should have sent a duplicate the day afterwards, as it was very important. I think I registered it, and that may have delayed it. I certainly hope you finally received it. After telling you all about the fire and my reasons for not coming back till everything was settled, I asked you to cable if you approved or disapproved of my plans. I would have received the cable in time to change and come back with Anne if you thought I ought to, but when no cable came, I decided that you evidently approved of my staying. I never thought of the letter being lost or delayed. I have not had any mail from you for ten days, so your letter of the third was most welcome. I think Aunt Ellen's New Year's luncheon must have been a great improvement over the Christmas dinner. I am certainly glad to hear that Springton is producing so much food. Even if it is not doing so well financially, the food is worth it. My mouth waters for some of that cider. If it will keep sweet, do keep a little for me. I am delighted that you are starting some bulbs for me. You know how much I love a windowsill full of plants. I have a large bunch of ivy, one of mistletoe, and a little pine tree planted in a shell pot in my room here. None of these get frosted when I have the window open at night.

I took a very interesting trip over to Vic this week. We went the usual way, but returned over the pampcel (?) plateau. It is a great windswept plain, one of the highest points in this neighborhood, and one of the most fought-over during the war. At every crossroads the road had been mined and blown up, so we had to make constant detours. On one side the field had been reclaimed and the winter wheat made a vivid green carpet; on the other side of the road it was complete desolation, barbed wire entanglements, trenches, shell holes, etc., the usual scene. At the very highest point there was a rough camp, and a group of men are living there and slowly reclaiming the land. They have to begin by

collecting all of the unexploded shells and exploding them. We saw seven go off while we were there, each making a geyser of earth and dust as it exploded. Then they collect the wire, etc., and finally fill in the trenches with huge shovels, the kind our contractors use for digging excavations. Next year the wasteland will be cultivated and will produce very good crops due to the explosives, which make the earth very fertile.

I have been acting directrice for five days, and Mrs. Elliott returns tonight. Everything has gone very smoothly in her absence, fortunately for me. I have a suspicion that she and Mrs. Dike have been trying me out to see if I would make a good directrice or not. It is not an easy job, but it has been rather fun, giving the orders and sitting in the seat of honor at the head of the table. One month from today I ought to be home!!!

With best love to all, Marian

Letter dated 25 January 1921

Blérancourt  
January 25th

I have used up the last sheet of the paper I brought over with me which fitted in the looseleaf cover, so I bought a tablet of this paper, which is not quite the same size, but was the nearest thing I could get in Paris. My present plans are to leave Blérancourt on the morning of February 3rd and go up to Paris with Dewhurst, who is going over to England then for her two weeks holiday. We will stay at the Wagram until the fifth, and I will have my passport visaed get my dresses, railroad ticket, etc. On the fifth she will cross to England, and I am going on a three day's Cook's tour to Verdun, the Argonne Forest, all the big forts, etc., with Mrs. Richard Weld, a very nice widow of about forty, from Boston. Her husband died last July, and she has come over to work for the committee and get a complete change of scene and surroundings. She is a cousin of Emily Philler. She spent Sunday here and when I told her of the trip which I was contemplating, she instantly asked if she could come too. I was delighted, as it is much nicer doing things with a friend than alone. Unfortunately she does not speak any French, so she is living with a French family in Paris and studying. She hopes at the end of a few months to have learned enough to come down to Blérancourt to work. Unless you are fairly fluent in French you are not much use in the committee, except as a chauffeur. We will get back from our trip on the evening of the seventh and then I expect to stay with Katherine for four days until I sail on the 12th. It hardly seems possible that I have been in Blérancourt for six months. The time has gone so quickly.

We have had very mild weather for the past ten days, and all the perennials in our flower beds are pushing through the earth, the weeping willows are covered with little green leaves, and yesterday I saw a forsythia bush in bloom. The spring is beginning so early that I am afraid the next frost will kill everything. It is curious how much milder the climate is in northern France than at home when you consider how much further south Pennsylvania is.

We have had some gypsies camping on the *place* since Saturday, and they have been running a little variety show and circus in a small tent. Dewhurst and Tilly decided to attend the performance, which they found very poor, and when they returned and came in to Mrs. Elliott's room, where we were all sitting eating English plum cake, Madelon entered behind them like a whirlwind and threw herself on Peppy, who was sleeping with Destroyer in front of the stove. The most active and bitter fight took place in the room and then in the corridor. I remember Grandma's advice about dogfights, and separated them finally by throwing an entire pitcher of cold water on their heads. The sudden shock

made them stop and run in their respective rooms, but not before Dewhurst got quite badly bitten on one of the knuckles of her left hand. I can't think what possessed Madelon to act that way unless she thought Tilly was going to pet the other dogs.

On Sunday we went to Laon to attend the memorial service for Mrs. Lawrence. I am enclosing a clipping about it from the *New York Herald*. Mrs. Elliott did not go, as she had a friend spending Sunday here, so I had to go as sous-directrice to represent her. It was a glorious day, as mild as April, and the drive over was beautiful. After the service we went back to the Anizy center where we all had lunch, about 55 altogether. They gave us a very good buffet lunch, and afterwards, on the way back, we made a detour in Coucy and saw the site of one of the big Berthas which was meant to bombard Paris. It only went as far as Compiègne, I believe, but the foundation was enormous, a great excavation, filled in with the heaviest kind of concrete work, painted with camouflage. The little railway track which was used to bring in the ammunition from the main railroad line was still there, but of course the gun had been removed.

I am hoping for a letter from home today, as a boat got in on Saturday.

With much love, Marian

Letter dated ca. 26 January 1921

Blérancourt (Aisne)  
Father's birthday

I received five letters yesterday after not having any for ten days, and they were very welcome, especially Auntie's, Eleanor's and Grier's. George is not as good a correspondent as the rest of you, but I suppose he is too busy. My mail seems to accumulate and arrive in batches of four or five together, just the way Grier's did during the war. I never got the cable you sent me a Christmas, but I was sure you had sent it, although Anne tried to make me believe you had forgotten me. But I know better. I did get the one you sent in answer to mine. I got worried because I had not had any letters or a Christmas cable and thought some of you might be sick. I am very glad to have the registered cable address, and I will use it to send you a wireless to let you know when to come over and meet me. I have to report to the New York office when I land and then I am entirely out of the committee. So unless I land before three o'clock, we will have to spend the first night in New York. I think I will land in my uniform, as I hear it is much easier getting through the Custom House.

I have spent the afternoon at St. Paul, paying farewell visits to the Curé and all my particular friends. It really is one of the nicest of our villages, and the people are far nicer there. There is a great deal of grippe among the children at present, and one baby in St. Paul developed pneumonia and was desperately ill for three days. One of our nurses spent two nights out there with him and pulled him through. Today he is convalescent and looks quite well again.

We had visitors today for lunch, a Mr. and Mrs. Godwin from New York. They are touring through the northern part of France and came to see the work of the American committee. Tracy and I were put on each side of them to entertain them during lunch. Mrs. Elliott went over to Soissons on Thursday and stayed until Friday afternoon, so I was directrice again for a very short time. Last evening while I was sitting in Tracy's room reading *Two Gentlemen of Verona* aloud, the man who runs our electric light plant came rushing in to say that he had found the other electrician unconscious when he returned from his supper. The man had gone to sleep in the room with the door shut and the gasoline fumes had made

him senseless. Mrs. Elliott and I were still dressed so we hurried over and gave him aromatic spirits of ammonia. He came to very quickly, but could not walk home for some time. Little excitements like this keep happening in the committee. It reminds me of life on the farm.

With love to all,  
Affectionately, Marian

Letter dated 1 February 1921

Blérancourt (Aisne)  
February 1st

This is the last letter I will write to you from Blérancourt as I leave for Paris on Thursday morning. It seems very strange to think that my time with the committee is up, and I am really sorry in many ways to go, but I am so anxious to get home and see you all again I am counting the days.

I have finished all the work connected with the *magasin* and I'm leaving with flying colors, so that I feel *very* glad I decided to stay this last month. I am so glad both of you approved of my staying. Auntie is a true sport, as I know she was disappointed. I do hope my missing letter has turned up by now.

I had a most interesting day today as I finally visited a sugar factory. There are only four working in the Aisne; there were 166 before the war, but most of them were so completely destroyed by the Germans that they cannot be restored. This one was outside of Soissons at a village called Noyant. Tilly and I went over in the staff car and went with the head nurse from the Soissons unit, Miss Walker, and one of their workers named Kelly, from Ohio. Miss Walker was a friend of the manager and got us permission to go through the plant. Mrs. Elliott had planned to go to, but at the last minute the treasurer of the committee telephoned he was coming down from Paris to see her, so she had to stay home, much to everyone's disappointment. The process of sugar-making was fascinating, and we watched it from the time the beets were dumped out of the wagons in the courtyard until the finished sugar was filled into sacks and hauled away to the station. There was a delicious sweet smell all through the factory, like a faint molasses. I kept thinking how interested Father would have been in the whole visit, only he would not have waited as long as I have to go through a factory.

Tomorrow afternoon I'm going out to Bichancourt to be godmother by proxy for Anne. The baby is to be named Anne-Marie in honor of us both. The last name is Salot, which is not so pretty. After that I am going to St. Paul to eat a farewell cake which one of my friends there has made for me, and then Dewhurst and I are going to take her trunks to the station and check them. I have persuaded Mrs. Elliott to become *marraine* of St. Paul when I leave and give up her village of Vassens.

With love for all, Marian

Letter dated 4 February 1921

Hotel Wagram, Paris  
February 4th

This is the last letter I will mail home, and I am not sure it will arrive before I do, but I will continue to write until I reach New York and bring the sheets with me, so as to finish the description of my trip.

This evening, while Dewhurst and I were eating dinner, Charlie Davis walked into the dining room. He looked awfully surprised to see me, and immediately joined us and had dinner with us. He has just come over from London, and leaves on Sunday for Rotterdam, so I will not see him again. He seemed very glad to see someone from what Gay calls the "Home Town."

Dewhurst and I left Blérancourt yesterday morning at 8:50. Tilly drove us over to the station in the staff car in a dense fog. I said an affectionate farewell to everyone, including the dogs. Tracy is going to bring Peppy up to me next week. I got her steamship ticket today. After we got to the hotel I immediately went to the Préfecture de Police to have my passport visaed. I think I have now complied with all of the necessary formalities before sailing. In the afternoon I visited my two dressmakers and paid them. In the evening we went to the Variétés theatre to see *Le Roi*. It was very cleverly done, and is a satire on the French cabinet. *Le Roi* is a cleverly disguised portrait of Edward VII of England.

Today we took lunch with the Jays, some friends of Dewhurst's. Mme. Jay was an English girl who drove an ambulance over here during the war. She met M. Jay while he was wounded, and a romance was the result. They have a lovely apartment on the Avenue de Courcelles, opposite the Parc Monceau. Their little son, Peter, is eleven months old, and one of the most adorable children I have ever seen, who has been utterly spoiled by his father, who gives him everything he wants. M. Jay is a very nice Frenchman of about forty-five. I hope the match turns out more successfully than Katherine's and Marcel's did.

The committee gave me a surprise dinner the night before I left Blérancourt, and a very fine send-off. I had spent the afternoon out, first at Bichancourt, where I stood godmother by proxy for Anne's godchild, little Anne-Marie. Then I paid several calls in St. Paul, and as soon as tea was over I took my trunks over to Noyon with Dewhurst, where we went to meet Maynard, who was returning from her leave. While I was out they decorated the dining room with things from the store and tastefully arranged ladles, dippers, etc., in semi-circles on the tablecloth. This was put on in my honor as we usually eat on oilcloth. We also had candles on the table, and a very good dinner, filet of beef, fancy patisserie, etc., and champagne. I left with flying colors, which was what I wanted to do. I am certainly glad I stayed the extra month. Madelon, Tilly's dog, who has become very devoted to me, began to suspect something when she saw my trunk leave, and with the dog's instinct that I was going to leave, she stuck as close to me as possible all evening, came in and got on my bed at six in the morning, and then sat in the chair by me at breakfast.

I went up to the committee's office for the last time this morning and reported to Mrs. Tracy. I'm going to take lunch with Mrs. Dike next Wednesday at her apartment. I think she wants me to do something; she usually has a motive under every action, and does not often invite anyone except the directrices to take a meal with her. I wonder what it is next week.

I start tomorrow with Mrs. Weld on our three days trip to Verdun, etc. When I get back Mrs. Elliott is coming up to Paris to stay with me for a couple of days.

With best love, Marian

I got three letters from home yesterday.

Letter dated 6 February 1921

St. Menchould  
February 6th

We have spent two of the most interesting days in the Argonne and that Verdun. I met Mrs. Weld at the Gare de l'Est yesterday morning after saying goodbye to Dewhurst, who was crossing to England. Our party consists of a tobacco farmer and his wife who live on a farm in the Connecticut Valley, and a party of five people from Lansdowne, Pennsylvania. They are quite impossible in every way, and are so afraid they will miss something and not get their money's worth that they worry our guide all time. Fortunately they are in one car and the farmer, his wife, Mrs. Weld and I with the guide in the other.

We went by train to Reims, and after seeing the cathedral, the church of St. Remy, etc., we started directly after lunch in two limousines on a sixty-mile ride along the Champagne front. We went almost entirely along the German trenches through Berru, where there was an observation post which commanded a view of the entire city of Reims, then through Pont Favarger, and crossed Mont Muret. The country is a rolling one, and the hills, which are entirely bare of trees, looked like the deserts of Arizona after an earthquake. The ground was pockmarked with shell holes as far as you could see, and zig-zag lines of trenches stretched off in all directions. The ground is rather white and chalky, and the trenches and shell holes showed white against the brown fields. At one place we stopped to see a German skeleton which is standing upright in the trench with the helmet and shoes still on.

We spent the night at the Hotel de Metz, a quaint little inn in St. Menchould, just on the edge of the Argonne Forest. This morning we started in at 8:30 and went through the Argonne to the front-line trenches held by the Americans. They are in a little valley, and only separated from the German ones by a small hill. The Bavarian troops were opposite them, and we went through Crown Prince Rupprecht's dugout, a very elaborate one of concrete, painted with camouflage. It had a German tiled stove, bathroom, and a complete kitchen. We walked in it by a long duckboard path from the main road.

From there we went to Romagne, the big American cemetery, where 28,000 of our troops lie. It is a most beautifully kept, impressive place, and I cannot see how anyone whose son or husband is buried there can even consider moving the body across the water. It seems so much more fitting to let them lie in the place where they fell. Mrs. Weld wanted to put some flowers on the grave of her young brother-in-law, Davis Weld, so we had bought some mimosas in St. Menchould. While I was helping her arrange the flowers, I looked at the surrounding graves, and Sam Hazlehurst's was almost next to it. Directly opposite was Frank Battle's. I suppose if I had time to look further I would have seen others that I knew.

From Romagne we went to Montfaucon, the hill which the Americans stormed and finally captured with heavy losses. It was here that the Crown Prince had his observatory from which point of vantage he watched Verdun. While we were there it started to snow, but only a few flakes fell. We reached Verdun in time for lunch. Verdun lies in the middle of the valley of the Meuse and is surrounded with a circle of hills, which are defended on the side toward Alsace with the big forts Douamont and de Vaux. There are several others less important.

The actual city of Verdun is not as completely destroyed as I thought it would be, but the surrounding country is a barren, uninhabited wilderness which it will take years to reclaim. There were many vultures, crows and magpies flying over the battlefields, and we saw two wild boar running across an open stretch. They were taking shelter in a small patch of what had been trees. The bare stumps are all that remain now, and in summer they must look even worse than they do now, as at present all of the woods look bare and dead. It is much easier to see the dugouts which cover every hillside while the



trees have no leaves. There are thousands of these dugouts, and the hillsides look like the cave dwellers of Arizona or Mexico.

In the afternoon we went out to Fort de Vaux and the trench of the bayonets. From the summit of the Fort could see the entire plain, the boundary line of Alsace and Metz in the far distance. The wind was terrific there and very cold. We went all through the fort, which was most interesting, but dripping with moisture, and, I suspected, full of rats, although I did not see any. Two of the ladies in our party kept wishing they had not come down into the fort, but as they could not go back, they were obliged to continue. I was reminded of Auntie at Heidelberg.

The trench of the bayonets is near Fort Douamont. In it an entire company, 165 men, was buried by an exploding shell while they were standing at attention. Their bayonets are sticking above the ground in a long line. A monument has been erected over it to protect them from the weather by a Mr. Randolph of Buffalo, New York. He was killed two days after it was dedicated while going from Paris to London by airplane.

We came back to St. Menhould for the night.

#### Letter dated 7 February 1921

Hotel Palais Royale, Paris  
February 7th

We left St. Menhould at nine this morning and came back to Reims through the French lines, through Chalons, Epernay, the famous farm de la Marquise, which is a heap of stones now. The French trenches are in a plain, and the country is not such a barren waste as the German lines. They are only separated by a long ridge of hills about ten miles wide. Their trenches were nothing like as strong as the Germans', many of which are reinforced with concrete, while the French retaining walls are usually of woven basket work.

At Chalons we saw the remains of a French evacuation hospital, which the Germans bombed one moonlit night, killing 15 doctors, 48 nurses, and about 200 wounded. About fifteen miles outside of Reims we crossed the famous Hindenburg line, three lines of trenches, heavily reinforced with concrete supports. Then we came to the Fort de la Pompelle, now a great pile of ruins, which cannot be touched for some time on account of the hundreds of dead which are buried in the foundations.

We lunched at Reims and took the train back to Paris, arriving at 5:40. It was one of the most interesting and depressing trips I have ever taken, and while I would not have missed seeing the battlefields, I do not want to go again. As I stood on the hill above Verdun and looked at the city which cost France 400,000 lives to defend, only 80,000 bodies have been found since, I realized as never before the awfulness of war. The Verdun, to me, represents the soul of France, and the death struggle of the nation, which in the end came out of the fire victorious. But at such a cost!

When I reached the Palais Royale I found my trunks in my room, and Joan and Ms. Walker, the head nurse from Soissons, in the adjoining one. We took dinner at Boeuf à la Mode, and then went to the Theatre Edouard VII to see Lucien Guitry and his new play *Le Comedien*, written by his son Sasha Guitry. It was very clever and amusing as a picture of French stage life.

Mrs. Walker left for Soissons in the morning, and Joan and I spent the morning shopping. We took

lunch at the Italian restaurant back of the Opéra Comique, and then sat in our rooms and talked until it was time for her train. I hated to see her go and felt as if I ought to go back home to Blérancourt with her. It is strange how attached you become to a place after having lived in it six months. I was very fortunate in having such a congenial directrice to work under, as it either makes or mars your time with the committee. I am devoted to Joan, and hope we can keep up our friendship after we both are home again.

After she left me, I went to Katherine's for tea and had a very nice time with her, hearing all the latest news of her family, etc. Didier is in Lyons, Henri at Fismes with the Graves Registration Bureau, Kitty at Palm Beach as usual.

#### Letter dated 11 February 1921

February 11th

On Wednesday morning Peppy arrived and I found her in my room when I returned at noon. She gave me a most enthusiastic welcome, and we both went to lunch at Mrs. Dike's. Mrs. Dike and I lunched in state in the dining room, and Peppy with Mixer in the kitchen. Mixer is a sort of dandy Dinmont terrier, and Briquette is one of her children. Mrs. Dike has a very handsome, oriental-looking apartment on the Avenue Montaigne, not far from the Eiffel Tower. We had a very good lunch and Mrs. Dike was most agreeable. I understand she can be equally unpleasant when she wants to, but I have never seen her that way. She wanted me to promise to come back again to work with the committee, but we had ended by each agreeing to write later on.

In the evening Mrs. Weld and I went to the Marguery for dinner, and when I got back I packed my trunks. Yesterday I spent doing final errands in the morning, lunching at Piccardi's with Mrs. Weld, and in the afternoon we took walked through the Tuileries Gardens. Three classes of boys from the public schools were having their physical drill, about 100 of them in charge of an instructor who wore a frock coat. The drills were exactly what we are giving the children in the Aisne.

I took Peppy back to the hotel and left her, and then went to call on Mlle. Poursadouz, where Mrs. Weld is living, studying French. Mlle P. looks as if she came out of Cranford, and her round tea table, around which we all sat, looked like the illustration from an old-fashioned novel. After I left there I met Katherine at the Rond Point, and she went with me to select a hat. I found a very nice black one, with a lace bow hanging down one side.

Yesterday afternoon I went to the afternoon service at the American Episcopal Church, as it was Ash Wednesday. I paid a luncheon call on Mme. Jay first, but found her out. Today I shopped in the morning and then lunched with Katherine. We had a very nice time together, and for the first time she spoke of Marcel, and hinted how unhappy her life has been in France. Just as I was leaving Mr. Ware came in.

I took my trunks to the Gare du Nord and gave them the agent of the Holland America line there, and then paid a final visit to Morgan Harjes. This evening Mrs. Weld and I took dinner at Boeuf à la Mode, and went to the Comédie Française to see a play called *Paraître*. It was beautifully done, but quite unpleasant.

#### Letter dated 13 February 1921

*S. S. Rotterdam*  
February 13th

Yesterday morning, Lincoln's birthday, Peppy and I took the 10:40 train from the Gare du Nord for Boulogne-sur-Mer. It was the special boat train and was crowded, especially with second-class passengers. Peppy was terribly scared at first, but slept most of the way. When we got to Boulogne at three o'clock, we had to have our baggage examined by the French Customs House before going on board the tender. It was just a formality, as they did not open any of the pieces. I took a dose of Mothersills on the train and did not feel the motion of the tender at all. We got on board at 4 p.m., I dragging Peppy up the gangway behind me. When I got on board I gave her to the ship's carpenter, who will take charge of her during the voyage.

I have a very large state room, all to myself, on the deck with the dining room, in the middle of the boat, quite the choicest location possible. The *Rotterdam* is a beautiful boat, one of the best I have ever been on, and the very cleanest, quite a contrast to the old *Savoie*, which was not very clean. I have a good seat at a table near the door, with three Dutch people and an American named Norton. Two of the Dutch people are a Mr. and Mrs. Lentz, from Amsterdam; he comes over frequently but this is his wife's first trip. She usually stays in Holland with her mother. They are a very nice couple. The other is a man named Willing, probably the anglicized version of a Dutch name. He is in the export tobacco trade in Montréal, Canada. I have played bridge with them and they are all most agreeable. One of the men or both must be a Director on this line, as we have the most wonderful special dishes at every meal. The regular menu is perfectly delicious, and these extra things are marvelous. Unfortunately neither Mr. Norton or I dare eat much of them, he because his digestion is quite wrecked by the coarse bread of Europe and I because they are too rich.

My chair on deck is next to Mrs. E. Laidlaw Benet, a very attractive woman of about forty-five, from New York. I suspect her of being a divorcée, and perhaps she is just returning from getting it in Paris as she has been living there for three months, which is the necessary length of time. However she is a most amusing companion, and already knows every man on board, and if I would let her would introduce them all to me. She was staying at the same hotel in Paris as my old friend Mrs. Wilson, who is now no longer thinking of working for the committee since an interview with Mrs. Dike, which Mrs. Dike described to me, and which must have been quite snappy.

The rest of the first cabin passengers are a cosmopolitan lot, some Swiss, some German, a few American and a great many Hungarians and Dutch. You hear every language spoken on deck. There are only twenty in the first cabin, so the boat seems quite empty. We crossed to Plymouth during the night and arrived early on Sunday morning. The tender came out about 10:30 and we got away at eleven. The first two days were remarkably smooth and I took Peppy for a long walk each morning on the lower deck. Of course she is not allowed on the promenade deck. She seems in excellent health and spirits and as there are seven other dogs in the kennels, I do not think she is having a lonely time. I can keep her in my cabin whenever I want to, so I have her there part of each day.

The last two days have been quite rough and we have not made such good runs in consequence. We are now about halfway across. If we do not reach New York on Monday, I understand we will not be allowed to land until Wednesday, as Tuesday is Washington's Birthday and holiday for the Customs House officials.

The hairdresser who did my hair at Richard's last Friday wore Croix de Guerre ribbon, and I asked him where he was during the war. He told me he was the sergeant who placed the memorial stone in the

wall of Coucy-le-Château to commemorate the capture of the town by the French. His division was the one which stormed it and drove out the Germans.

The stewards on this boat are a splendid looking lot of young Dutchman, and it is a sad contrast to look at them and think that the same type of young Frenchmen are lying in the hills around Verdun, so completely annihilated that a cross saying "Here perished the — Infantry of the third etc. Army on — 19—" is all that can show where they fell. Why should all the youth of Holland be spared when the war took the flower of England, France, Belgium and Russia, not to mention our own men or the Germans?

Letter dated 18 February 1921

February 18th

The last three days have been awfully rough, and in consequence we did not make very good runs, as there was a headwind which held us back; however we are now south of Cape Race, and it is foggy as usual and in consequence somewhat smoother. All kinds of rumors are in the air about our probable arrival. The favorite one is that the U. S. government has issued orders that all ships are to be held at quarantine for twelve days if any case of typhus is discovered on board. I cannot believe they will keep the first and second cabin, but all things are possible. The other rumor is that we will arrive too late to disembark on Monday evening, and that as Tuesday is Washington's Birthday, the Custom House will be closed and we will have to wait till Wednesday. I don't believe either of these tales.

Peppy seems to be enjoying the voyage considerably. The other passengers and the stewards are very good to her, and Mrs. Benet takes her for walks on deck when it is too rough for me. Thanks to doses of Mothersills I have been well, except for a dizzy feeling when the weather was very rough. That seems to be the only trace of seasickness left. I wish I had discovered Mothersills while Father was alive.

There was to have been a dance on deck last evening, but it had to be postponed as the weather was too rough. The promenade deck is the widest one I have ever known, and is enclosed in glass, which makes it a delightful place to sit, even on the coldest days.

Letter dated 19 February 1921

*S. S. Rotterdam*

February 19th

The rumors never end on this boat, but this last one is a fact. Last night the captain received orders by wireless to change his course and go to Boston, and he immediately posted notices saying that if the first and second cabin passengers wanted to get off there, he had no objection. No one has been able to find out the reason for this change of plans, but I think it has something to do with the order quarantining the Port of New York for typhus. In any case the captain will not give any definite answer about when we will arrive in New York, and most of the passengers think it will be safer not to risk being held on the boat in New York Harbor, and intend to get off in Boston. I have not quite decided, but expect to do the same. I thought I would wait till tomorrow morning before deciding, and see if there were any new orders during the night. The fortune teller in Paris told me I would not return at the time, or to the place, I expected to, so this is evidently what he meant. I certainly hate having to make decisions alone, but I suppose it is good for me.

Today the sea has been smooth and it has been terrible cold. The water freezes on the deck, and there

are icicles on all the rigging.

Letter dated 20 February 1921

February 20th

I decided to get off at Boston as we heard the *Ryndam*, after line fourteen days in the harbor of New York, is now coming up to Boston to discharge her passengers there. I think there is too great a risk staying on board to till we get to New York, as we might be held up in the same way. So this morning I sent a wireless home, telling of my change of plans.

About eleven this morning we ran into a regular blizzard with blinding snow, so thick that we have been obliged to go at half speed all afternoon and keep our foghorn going. With the exception of about an hour of fog just south of Cape Race, this is all we have had. The snow is driven along by a high following wind and sweeps around the boat and along the decks. The open part of the boat is quite buried with snow and ice and is very beautiful, but it is terribly cold. I think this must be the tail-end of the blizzard which has been raging at St. John's, Newfoundland, for the past week. Everyone on board has been busy deciding whether to get off or not, and I think great many have not enough money for the trip to New York. Fortunately I drew \$200 at the American Express Co. just before leaving Paris. We are supposed to reach Boston tomorrow morning, but I think the snow will delay us somewhat.

Letter dated 21 February 1921

February 21st

Yesterday afternoon we ran into a blinding snowstorm about two o'clock and had to run at half speed the rest of the afternoon. I took Peppy from the carpenter and kept her in my room so that I would have her ready to take off in the morning. But evening the storm became so bad and the snow so dense that we could not see ahead at all, and had to stop our engines and wait until morning. The sea was very rough due to the 75-mile gale which was blowing and the boat rolled and pitched terribly on night. We were about 100 miles from Boston, and directly in the path of the coast boats. We kept our foghorn going all night, but fortunately I could hardly hear it in my cabin. The captain said today that in the fifty years he had been on the ocean he had never had a worse storm.

I sent a wireless home yesterday morning saying that we were going to land at Boston. This morning the sun was shining and the ocean was covered with white crested waves. The entrance to the Boston Harbor is quite tortuous, past several little islands and reefs. We picked up a pilot and then the quarantine officers came on board. They made us all file by them in the dining room, and after a very thorough examination the passengers were given a clean bill of health and allowed to proceed.

We landed at the Cunard S. S. Co.'s dock in East Boston about four in the afternoon. It was bitterly cold on the wharf, and there had been a blizzard the day before in Boston, and the city was digging itself out from under three feet of snow. There were no taxis to be had, but Mr. Schuyler got a car from a garage and took Mrs. Benet, Peppy and me, with all of our hand luggage, over to the Copley Plaza as soon as we were through with the Custom House. Our trunks were checked straight through to New York from the dock. We reached the hotel at eight o'clock, all feeling quite land sick. We got very nice rooms, and met most of the rest of the boat passengers in the lobby and dining room. Peppy was delighted to get onshore and feel the solid ground under her feet again. I was able to keep her in my room in the hotel and get good meals for her.

Letter dated 22 February 1921

February 22nd

This morning we took the 9:15 train for New York and reached the Grand Central Station at 3:30, where Auntie, Eleanor and Grier met me. I had sent Can a telegram to come and get Peppy, so she was there too, and Peppy did not know her when she first saw her. As soon as we arrived at the station the city Board of Health made us go into a room, where they kept us for about ten minutes while they found out if we had been examined for typhus. They appear to be terribly afraid of having an epidemic of typhus in New York, as several of the incoming boats have had cases on board. Strange to say they never examined Peppy. My family have been staying at the Waldorf for several days, so we went there for the night and came home on the morning of the 23rd.

From the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 20 February 1921

*Miss Marian Bartol will return to her home, 1932 Locust St., tomorrow. She has been working with the American Committee for Devastated France for the past six months.*