

# SOCIÉTÉ DES AMIS

(FRIENDS' WAR VICTIMS RELIEF COMMITTEE)

le 26 Mai 1918

Dear Mother & Dad,

Well, the first week over and I am beginning to fit in and feel at home, especially after the arrival of Dorothy North, the one American girl heretofore in this equipe and just back from a ten days vacation down in the Pyrenees. I like everybody here very well but she is just my kind and after six weeks over here in ~~Paris~~ with practically no American girls at all I can appreciate here hearty welcome for she has had six months of it and appreciates getting some one here who speaks her language.

The Boss - chef d'equipe - Mr. Weston is just back this morning from his vacation in North Wales so you see the family grows slowly and I quite see the reason why this has the reputation of being one of the smoothest running equipes in the Mission for they are all A1 people.

Monday of course was a holiday so Conly Chambers went over some of the system of the office work, which is quite heavy, with me. In the evening all but Miss Dumber went to see *L'Arlesienne* a French play - the music

2  
was intelligible and very good but the talk went over  
my head most of the time. after C.C. straightened out the  
plot for me at the end of the first act I managed  
to guess along at the rest rather decently and get  
some fun out of it. Mr. Pye-Smith went home in disgust  
at the end of the 4th act as he hadn't gotten the run  
of story yet so decided he wouldn't miss the last act  
much. Woodall had not been sleeping well but this bored him so he slept  
like a top after it - maintains it was too expensive a sleep potion tho.

The next three days I spent filing cards, letters, etc  
and helping catch up on records, etc and taking a couple  
of trips out, once on foot and once by bicycle, tagging  
along with Caddy Chambers, one day to visit several  
places to see if the things applied for at the office  
were as represented for sometimes they ask for furniture  
too big for the room, the other one to collect payments  
and see if other stuff was needed.

The system in this equipage is to sell needed  
furniture and furnishings and rent lodging to refugees  
at less than cost, the payments to come in monthly  
as convenient and the visiting to be worked in  
under cover of collection each month instead of  
having them come to the office to pay and then visiting  
for no apparent reason. This way too they do not  
feel at all that they are recipients of charity so the  
really proud spirits who often need help most, are

SOCIÉTÉ DES AMIS

(FRIENDS' WAR VICTIMS RELIEF COMMITTEE)

free to come and buy. It also <sup>le</sup> makes it possible <sup>191</sup> to aid far more people (with the available funds and it weeds out sponging and lowering of morale quite effectively. I like the system better than any relief plan I have ever seen and of course it is elastic enough to give things outright in connection with the medical department and occasionally our stock but clothing is handled entirely by the nurses

The Ford has gone up to another town for its annual overhauling and whether I ever drive it or not is an open question. <sup>The idea is, if the overhauling is a good job, they will probably keep it up there but here's hoping for we'll need one soon as we begin on the department work, getting this system widened by</sup>

Friday afternoon I started out on a bike to do my first round of visiting and collecting <sup>alone</sup>. Studied the map well first and C.C. put the cards in logical calling order and added what notes he could on location. Started at 1.30 and got back at 8.30 as it began to pour. It is too long a story to write in detail but I had more fun than any time since I began to work over here. Made some 24 calls over a scattered territory out in the suburbs which are so laced with canals, roads, alleys, paths and bits of river that a comprehensive map is impossible - numbers jump wavy way and often are mislaid altogether and my French ear and tongue are both very weak. The country however is very lovely, the <sup>weather</sup> day perfect and everybody

(34)

so courteous and interested and ready to help that they make one feel like a favorite caller and not a collector of souls at all. I got lost innumerable times, so just asked each one where the next one lived and so worked along.

Tomorrow afternoon I did it again on the other side of town and never got lost once. Got a puncture at the place farthest out and just after at my next call ran into Miss MacFarlane so walked home with her.

I am very much in love with these people, they are so plucky, jolly and kind through all their troubles that they are an inspiration any time and my French has just got to grow now. This kind of work will keep me busy the rest of the month easily as there are eleven sections to cover, preferably by the 31<sup>st</sup>. By that time I'll know considerably more of the town and a bit more of French. The department outside of the town are practically all cash or gift transactions, conditions often to be verified by letters from the mayor of this town, etc. Did my first French letter the other day too, much to the amusement of C. C.

Tell me about Mrs. Lewis military son-in-law. From the announcement you sent I just supposed he was one of the Friends Unit.

Had a very amusing letter from Don Maguire up in the north, having arrived 3 weeks ago in France and soon to go into the worst of it! Offers me a lot of his equipment as he has to cut to one piece of 50 lb. limit. Lots of love to you both, Buelah