

1915?

My dear Miss Tarbell,

I have been thinking of you constantly since we left New York, — but have waited a bit before writing so that I might tell you something of my work, which did not begin until Tuesday, owing to Miss Quitz-Rees's absence.

When we reached Greenwich on Saturday

afternoon, the ~~spring~~ sunshine made the lovely countryside most attractive, and the school grounds (of some twenty-eight acres), were all abloom. The drive from the station is considerably more than a mile, and the village is a full mile from where we live; but there is a short cut across the fields which, though very decidedly hilly, takes much less time than the road when one goes afoot.

The school is delightful; made up of a main building and a number of cottages, including an infirmary and a dear little stone chapel, where Mr. Stewardson, (former President of Hobart), has two Sunday services.

Miss Gruetz-Bees has her own house on the edge of the grounds, facing Lake Avenue; we are almost across the street from it, and near the gate in the

Wall by which we enter this end of the grounds, — the end farthest from the main building where the dining-room is.

The walk to our meals is thus through the grounds, and quite long. And the meals are the only serious problem that confronts me. The school has arranged to have the landlady here serve breakfast for Mother, (I go to the school), and she has valiantly accomplished the walk back

And forth at other times.
But the noise in the dining-
room is so deafening, that
I don't know whether she
will be able to keep it up.
The hundred and forty girls
talk at the top of their
lungs, so that it is impossible
to make your next neighbor
hear without screaming, —
and this is frequently
punctuated by yells and
prolonged handclapping whenever
an announcement is made

of some treat in store for them. The meal hour seems to be given over to announcements, and to communal celebrations, and I assure you it is an ordeal! There is to be a track meet on Saturday; and tonight dinner began with riotous song, followed by reading of the names of the athletes chosen to take part; then succeeded separate and prolonged cheers, yells and stamping for each of these popular felle in turn, which kept up with slight cessation until desert. I noticed that only one of the faculty, (the athletic director) was there! It was awful; and while Mother didn't say a word, I must know her head ached and her nerves jumped.

I am going to see what I can arrange about getting something ready for her here before I go over, as the little woman who keeps the

House would let me use her dishes. They can not allow me to bring anything home for her from the school because it makes extra work for the maids to pack a basket.

Our room is very comfortable, and the little bath room is almost "private" because we are the only outsiders in the house. We live with Mr. and Mrs. Bart Murphy, — Mrs. Murphy being

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first nineteen and a bride
of six months' standing!
Mr. Murphy is a nice, big
young Irishman of twenty-four
who is chauffeur for one
of the Greenrich families,
and they have all the dignity
and sense of responsibility
of their new estate. She
is a nice little thing, very
sweet; and she told me
it seemed "awful lovely"
to have someone in the house,
for she had been very lonesome.

Miss Ryan was in New York when we arrived. I met her Sunday morning, and she said she could not suggest any duties for me until Miss Quitz-Bess returned on Sunday night. So I had a chance to make many observations and get somewhat accustomed to things by Tuesday morning, when I went to Miss Quitz-Bess's house at nine o'clock. Sunday had been a day of sizzling heat, but Tuesday was even worse, — with that electrical disease and nervousness that is so bad. I found her tired and almost paralyzed nervous, with a secretary and a heap of correspondence to attack. She told me as briefly as possible about her library and asked me to go right on while she was at work, but not to speak with her while she was writing. I knew exactly how she felt, and there was

Something pathetic to me in
the nervous quiver that seemed
to go over her at the thought
of being spoken to by anyone.

I arranged a little corner
to work in, and managed
to make no noise whatever
while I diagnosed the case
of the library, — and if ever
an assemblage of perfectly
helpless books shrieked
to high heaven for treatment
this did! I wish you could
see the alleged catalogue;

it is a mess. And heaps of uncatalogued darlings waiting patiently to be attended to, while magazines are stacked about, some lost from the sets — well, you can fancy it.

I did not say one word till I had a brief report ready for her, and left. By the next morning when she came down at nine, I was ready with the uncatalogued entries. She read a few and then sat plump down

on a ledge, threw up her hands and said "Good Heavens!
What a comfort it is to have someone here who knows
what a book is!" After that we were friends. I suggested
sorting the magazines and shipping them to the binder, and
her look of relief was enough for me! There is nothing
so joyous as doing of real service to someone, and I can
see that I can help here. Needless to say, the house itself
there are very happy ones, for the library is wonderfully fine.
Her collection of French books must, I feel sure, be
of unusual value; she has specialized in French 16th century
literature and I am finding new treasures every day. I am
crazy to re-make the whole card catalogue eventually, and
I hope she will let me. I fear, however, that the school
library will have to be tackled first, as she says it

badly needs attention. Having
my French, Italian and Latin
helps a lot just now, as
I can do things for her that
her secretary can not.

When I went to meet
her, I took some of my
lecture announcements, clippings,
etc., thinking it possible we
might speak of my work.
The right moment has not
yet come, but I left the
envelope on her desk, and
I notice it daily draw.

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nearer to the front. Some
 day she will read them, — or
 some other way will open.
 I long to give a talk to the
 girls; they had a lecture
 last night, for which I stayed,
 and it was both interesting
 and informing, I thought.
 I know I could interest
 both the girls and the faculty
 and make the talk useful
 and illuminating.

It looks to me now as
 if whatever I attempt to

As in the way of a class in the town may have to be undertaken
on my own effort. I am watching for a chance to broach
the subject to Miss Huntz-Gees, but it will have to be done
very carefully, as she is absorbed in her own mesh of affairs.

If you find a chance before long to send me a
card to even me person in the village, I will talk it over
with that person and will perhaps be able to give me talk,
which would, I feel sure, lead to more. Meantime, I am
leaving no stone unturned.

I shall write no more such tomcs as this, — it is
an imposition to ask you to read it! Oh, my dear and
very kind friend, I can write about all these externals,
but how can I ever convey to you my thankfulness and
gratitude for this wonderful refuge and opportunity?

My daily and nightly comfort
in the thought that there is no
bill rolling up for living
expenses is so great that I
have taken a new lease of
life. The fresh air and
exercise will do us both
so much good, and I feel
sure that Mother will grow
steadily stronger. And the
atmosphere of the school is
so deeply congenial, and
the work so entirely what I
love to do, that I could
not be in a more agreeable.

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place.

When I think of your spontaneous helpfulness, — of the way you received me that day, when I was doing a thing to which I had devoted myself for days, and when indifference or self-absorption on your part would have had so fearful an effect, — I am sure there is nobody just like you in the whole round world.

We so often admire people for their achievements,

But find them personally disillussining, that to find a woman
whom one has admired ^{as} I have you to the supreme test
of human genuineness and then find that she is finer
and deeper and more real than I dreamed she could be,
— that is a thing to cherish in one's heart and to thank
me's Maker for.

You will forgive my meagre expression
of all that swells in my heart. I am very tired tonight,
but I could not wait longer to tell you how well it is
with us. Faithfully yours, Edwina Spencer.

177 Lake Avenue
Greenwich, Conn.
April twenty ninth