



Giverny,
Nov. 25, 1914

Dear Mildred,

The unpacking of the two barrels will be like Xmas. Indeed with the money order in my pocket-book (your letter only arrived this morning) I feel b as if Xmas were actually here. Won't there be rejoicing at the hospital when they learn the news! It seems only a few days ago that I wrote asking for help. I knew you would do your best but I really didn't expect so much. Why, the other day at MacMonnies' we were feeling cheerful over 4 or 5 dollars that some one had sent, and here, all at once, comes 100, which, as it is accompanied by a gift of clothes, can go entirely to keeping the hospital open. You don't know how this cheers me up: and I need it, too, for three days ago on coming back from the hospital I found that I had a temperature of ^{nearly} 104 degrees. It had been bitterly cold and I suppose that I got chilled cutting wood and fussing over the green-house stove in the evening. Of course I felt pretty miserable but, as one of the young doctors ^{from Vernon}, was able to come to Giverny every day, I really enjoyed the two and a half days in bed without interuptions to continuous thinking. It was the first chance I had had ^{to do any consecutive work and to hear from myself.} Did I tell you that I had decided to attempt writing a short and compact History of Medicine? I had all the available books-brou brought up into my room and had a perfectly splendid time adding to the notes I made last winter in Italy. Incidentally I began to see that, tho medicine is one of the sciences, the practice of medicine is a pure art. It does not require the same mental concentration as painting, but it needs the same capacity for taking in the situation as a while; and, in carrying out a cure, you put ^{into it} as much of your own individual point of view as in creating a picture. I can no more sit down in a laboratory and investigate the intricacies of the human body than I can sit in the studio and investigate the effects of light, but just as I have, in painting, used the ~~in~~ investigating

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Date: November 25, 1914

Description: William Johnston informs Mildred Burrage about the hospital, France, 1914

relief
investigations of others, so I can, for the ~~entire~~ of suffering, use the results of the scientific research. This may seem absurdly obvious to you, but you must remember that when I parted company with medicine as a profession and, before the artistic side of me had had a chance to develope, I was the most enthusiastic medical researcher you ever saw, and the man who added on grain to the sum total of exact knowledge was, to my mind, was a more useful citizen than all the practitioners put together. I still think that the scientific discover is the greatest benefactor of mankind but, after these last few months among the wounded soldiers and the helpless peasants, I am perfectly willing to leave the ~~pam-p~~ palm to the discoverers & to go on practicing the Art of Medicine. Cheered by the thought that it is just as much of an art when practiced with a broken-down motor car among the peasants of France as with a shining Limousine in a clean & prosperous city.

Now, perhaps this isn't the way to talk to you when you are trying hard to get to work on the decorations but these are the only ideas I have had about anything and in, order to write to you at all (while the children, the little Salerous and the de Trebons are practicing a Japanese play in the studio next door, or rather, at the back of my neck) I have had to stick pretty close to what was uppermost in my mind. I know that you will eventually get started and that you will do something that will be interesting and beautiful to look at. If we can't possibly get back to America to see what you are doing and to help, we want you to plan to come over here in the spring to finish your work in the studio. I am sure that by then something will have happened to allow you to work in peace. Either the Germans will be out of France for good and all or you will be directing letters to Givernisch, am Seine, Germany, and will on arriving here ~~will~~ have your ticket taken by a uniformed individual in a spiked helmet.

Mrs. Johnston is now reading your letter and is quite overcome by what

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you and your family have done to help. You must thank them many many times and, if you should write again to any of the girls we know, please tell ~~the~~ them how much we appreciate their generosity. I realised when I wrote to you that people were asking on all sides for contributions and I can't get over my surprise at what you sent.

Mrs. J. says that we need art now more than ever. Beauty is being destroyed every day and, now that we can do nothing she relies on you to do the painting for the family, to carry out the family's ideas of a sane and intelligent Art. I am sure it will be a stimulus to be near Miss Wheeler. Please give her our very kindest regards, I wd-- I'd give a good deal to have just one look at her wall spaces.

Sincerely, W.B.J.

If the Turks would only accidentally shoot away the "Tennessee's" top-mast ----- wouldn't I be happy!!

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