

My dear Mrs Matland:

You see I am still hanging around A.P.O. 518 and am still a patient in No. 20 general Hospital. My hand goes on slowly so that I cannot yet dress myself and on that account I cannot get away immediately. St. Strauberg who goes with me is also making slow progress so that I must wait a bit for him. It looks now like 3 or 4 more days.

The little Christmas gift went off to you several days ago, its departure delayed by my sickness. They tell us that package mailed this week will reach the States for Christmas and I hope it comes in time to be in on that day. Yesterday the box containing the sweaters & two pairs of wonderful woollen socks arrived. I am greatly obliged again to you and warn you how poor soldiers are and how little they can hope to repay such nice kindnesses.

Yesterday was the holiday. Thanks giving and we had a regular dinner en famille with nurses & doctors all in the same

ness. The dinner was excellent, the speeches exceedingly good and "a good time was had" My Margaret Rhoad wore a little ring I had given her and it was sort of a formal announcement of our engagement, about coincident with that in the Chicago Papers at home. It was my first appearance since being taken sick and my only complaint was that they would not give me enough to eat. Have been on light diet for three weeks and weigh now 185 lbs with my heaviest overcoat on - such a slenderness.

Does mention sound good for a month or six weeks? I need the rest and am quite below par. I have developed a small furuncle on my left knee since yesterday and am getting disgusted with myself.

There has been considerable revelation to me living in a ward - my latest hectoric effusion is "a Ward night" does it get anywhere? Will have more subjects & sights to record and a different view point down south - mayhap I can turn out something. Will study life

reading & rereading my Italian down there.
That with writing & an out of door life
will occupy me for the weeks so that
time will not drag heavily.

Do Jolly me along with a letter.
May be I can get started on a regular
book - quiet stab? Some letters are certainly
by and me from the USA. DH still
remains faithful alone - got some
nice packages from that source to-
day.

May I wish you merry Christmas in
your happy warm home? Enjoy it - life is
keen - you know and you are just getting
a good grip on it. Will it not be hard
to let go - I hate to think of it. The banks
of the Mediterranean will hold me on
Christmas day - perhaps I shall be out
all day picking the wild spaghetti or
getting some pointers for my new book
on "Intensive Spaghetti Farming"

Here is a Merry Christmas - loan a
thought to my two fine girls - do you
suppose they miss their daddy any?
Gifts should be for personal use - I hope
mine is

Sincerely
H.S.