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Graduate With UNNRA in Greece

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Dear Friends:

I scarcely know where to begin. I left the States September 14 and arrived in Cairo October 20. We had a fairly long convoy trip as we took the troops to Leghorn, 20 miles from the firing line. Then we came back to Naples and were there 11 days. The harbor is a mess and the city very generally shot up. I was glad to get out although we were well billeted with American officers in an Army hotel. The opera was running and I did go to three performances that were lovely. I think that they were about the only bright spot in that filthy city. I revisited Pompeii and went to Herculaneum, which was interesting.

We flew to Cairo, which was a tough trip for me, as I was terribly airsick (for the first time in my life) all the way to Tripoli where we spent the night. The next day I prepared for it so was all right.

After 6 days in Cairo I was sent up here temporarily (so it was thought then). I am very glad, as I would be wild if I were sitting around Cairo waiting to get into Greece. I expected to be in Athens for Christmas, but you know from the papers why I am not.

This camp is really on a wonderful site—right on the Mediterranean. Any time during the day when I get too addled or aggravated, I just step outside and look at it and the surrounding country. We are camped on Arab land, and our buildings or areas are quite widely separated so that in between we have Arabs plowing with one wooden disc plows drawn by a camel, shepherds tending the flocks and burros at our front doors. At night we see many fires of the Bedouins. That is a rather discomforting sight, as our greatest menace is from marauding Arabs who steal from us continually. All of our windows are barred.

We of the staff live in brick huts and are more comfortable than I really hoped to be. We have electricity at night and running water in the room. Labor (such as it is) is, of course, no item, so we have hot water carried to us morning and night, our laun-
dry done and shoes shined. We have no heat, which is a big drawback. We have been warm enough in the daytime so far and have a fireplace in the lounge of our mess, so most of us spend our evenings there unless out at some dance. There are so many camps around here, and they just deluge us with invitations. So we work terrifically hard but we have a good time, too.

I am supervising four baby centers. They are really feeding and bathing stations for children up to 5 years old and pregnant and nursing mothers. We give out the milk and all supplemental food.

I have between 800 and 1,000 total so you can imagine the job, especially with all the native personnel. Our people are mostly from the islands and quite illiterate, so the teaching has been "nerve wracking." Now after 6 weeks when I sit down and look the situation over, I can see big gains. We've had to introduce a lot of new foods, but I've had less trouble than with children in the States. I never let them prepare it or give it the first time until I am there.

The worst thing I had to face was the great variety of totally inadequate formulas that all the babies not nursing were on. We have only one British and one American doctor with about 15 Greek in the camp. I think that every proprietary food ever concocted in the United States has been dumped here in the form of physicians' samples. They were just used indiscriminately and interchangeably. All the babies on them were scrawny and practically dying.

The new camp doctor arrived when I did, so he told all the doctors that I'd attend to the feeding. In a few cases I've had to use dried milk for psychological reasons, but all the rest are on evaporated milk and thriving beautifully, for which I'm very grateful. It was a terrible step to take, but it really had to be done, and the doctor was so tactful about it that the other doctors look on it as time saving. We have good public health nurses but, of course, could use more. I should explain that I have been assigned to the medical division.

The first week I was here we all nearly washed away in the worst torrent they've had for years. I hope never to go through anything like it again. Sixty-five percent of the people live in tents so you can imagine the chaos.

I've been to Jerusalem and Bethlehem twice, but the latter is terribly disappointing. It's so commercialized. It's about 65 miles from here. We have pretty good transportation, all by truck, but I've become very agile.

I've been very thankful for all my background training and experience many times.

Sincerely,

Onica Prall

A call for trained dietitians to serve overseas has been issued by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. In a letter to Dean P. Mabel Nelson, the UNRRA tells of the need for dietitians to serve in European camps for refugees.

The position demands these qualifications:
1. Skill in quantity food preparation and a variety of experience in institution management.
3. A speaking and reading knowledge of French, German or another language.
4. An age of 25 to 50 years.

Women who qualify and are recommended for the position will be given a short orientation course in the UNRRA plan of work at the University of Maryland, College Park. Salaries range from $4,000 to $5,000.

For more detailed information concerning this position and orientation course, write Miss Lelia Massey, executive secretary of the American Home Economics Association, 620 Mills Building, Washington 6, D. C.