

You've heard me say, too often no doubt, that being a scout in the rural amateur leagues hundreds of miles from New York must be the lowest position in professional baseball. I move from farm town to mill town watching ballplayers whose most obvious quality is enthusiasm for the game rather than talent to play it. I hope against all reason that a pearl will appear in this bucket of oysters and give Mr. Brush [New York Giants owner John T. Brush] a reason to notice me.

Well, let me tell you, dear girl, that this Saturday in a town called East Aurora I have found the pearl. This pearl is neither right-banded nor left and neither pitches nor catches. In fact, this pearl has only marginally to do with baseball and nothing to do with Mr. Brush. Are you sufficiently mystified? Good. Then read on.

My task in East Aurora was to scout two players, John Tarnisch and Billy Schumaker, pitcher and catcher, respectively, of the Roycrofters. This I did quite easily. I'm afraid neither is destined to wear a Giants uniform (or that of any other team, I'll wager). However the atmosphere at Hamlin's ballpark was so convivial that after the game I found myself following the crowd two blocks north to the Roycroft Inn.

A more handsome building than this Inn I have never seen and I am bringing you postcards to prove it. But what a feeling pervades the Roycroft. I passed through the thick oak doors of the Inn (into which were carved the curious words, "Produce Great People; The Rest Follows"), and was swallowed into a world of rustic beauty, peace, and good humor. The appointments, from the massive oak tables to the tiny copper napkin rings and everything in between, were all of the hand-crafted variety and I was to find that this Roycroft includes not just an inn but workshops where these articles are produced. In fact, these fellows on the baseball team who befriended me work in these Roycroft shops, as bookbinders, leather toolers, and furniture builders.

I spent a lovely while on the spacious front porch of the Inn sipping lemonade and talking with people from all over the country about the arts, the Roycroft and even baseball. I was a little timid at first, thinking this to be an intellectual gathering. How I missed your expertise in matters of literature and philosophy. As luck would have it, though, I found that professional baseball commands a little respect here. I became something of a celebrity since I have met the great [star Giants pitcher] Christy Mathewson.

At afternoon's end I was about to leave to catch the Buffalo train when I was invited by

popular consensus to dine at the Inn. Oh well, I thought, I'll catch the late train. Such was not the case. After a sumptuous dinner of fresh poultry and vegetables apparently from the Roycroft's own cultivation we repaired to the Salon for an impromptu talk by Elbert Hubbard who is the founder of the Roycroft and apparently nationally famous for his lectures. He was a charming, witty, and enthralling speaker and a good salesman as well because I bought several copies of his magazine *The Philistine* which I am bringing home to you. Nine o'clock found me at Hamlin's park once again to hear the Roycroft Band play at the Pavillion to the delight of all. What a shame that my favorite dance partner was so far away! Before I knew it I had missed the last train.

No matter here at the Roycroft, I simply bunked in at Emerson House with several of the Roycrofters. The Inn had long since been booked full and I doubt if Mr. Brush would like the looks of so noble an accomodation on my expense tally.


In the morning I once again attempted to catch the train, but was delayed by a hearty breakfast with my companions. Soon after I was escorted to a charming field stone and heavy timber building called the Chapel for morning service. This, however was not the kind of service our grim Reverend Worthington would approve of. A professor whose name I have forgotten spoke on "Work and the Leisure Class," and afterward we again found Mr. Hubbard extemporizing at the Inn. It was all I could do to pull myself away to catch the midday train. If this wildly-dressed and utterly magnetic man is the engine which drives the Roycroft, it is small wonder the place is so magical.

Well, my love, let us hope that good fortune allows us to marry soon, so that we might visit the Roycroft as man and wife. It is a rich place even without a great baseball team. I hope the Roycroft magic endures until we can see it together.

All my love, Philip



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 POSTSCRIPT. Well, Mr. Barnaby, we have no idea if you ever returned, but rest assured that the magic has endured even though there have been many challenges to it.

As a child in the 1950's growing up on Oakwood Avenue with the Roycroft in my back yard I knew the magic of the old place and I have never doubted it. I have watched her flourish and wilt, greet new owners and bid farewell to old ones, be both elegant and trashy, be maintained and stand forlornly, if defiantly, in neglect. No matter what her situation I have loved her magic and her bigness and her grace and her crazy roof lines and the intriguing collection of additions which were grafted onto the original structure as she evolved. For me the Roycroft Inn has always been magnificent.

Now, the Inn is once again going to know the excitement she must have felt nearly a century ago when she was making the transition from private home to workers' dormitory to inn. For the first time in years she is clean and new and filled with the Arts and Crafts furnishings she loves. She stands on Grove Street as she did in the early days of the twentieth century and welcomes a new community of Roycrofters with an old, familiar greeting:

"Without the door let sorrow lie, and if per chance it hap to die, we'll bury it deep in a Roycroft pie." —W. R. O.