

Letters From A Soldier's Wife

My Dear:
 What I am going to write now will seem a cold little word of thankfulness. I don't want it to seem so, but it will, because what I feel is so out of proportion to what I may express. I have walked through the Valley of the Shadow of Death and have come to green pastures. And I am dumb of body, though my spirit is eager to speak.

I didn't know what ship you were on, nor where it was likely to be at any given time. So when that transport was sunk last week I didn't dare to think. But I had to think. Oh, John, I am thankful, thankful, thankful!

The newspapers printed an extra early in the morning. Now that so many have gone from Lakewood, they send extras away out here, and I never hear the call without fear in my heart. When I caught the words "troopship torpedoed!" I was up and out on the street.

There was hardly more than a line, cabled, I suppose, and rushed into print. Many American soldiers have been killed, but details were not known.

I got through the next few hours some way, and then telephoned one of the newspapers. When the man I talked to understood I was the wife of a soldier—maybe of one who had been on the ship—he was very kind. He invited me to the office, where he said I could have the news as it came in.

There were other women there in a room I suppose belongs to an official, for it was very comfortable with leather-cushioned chairs and books lying about. You see that room always will be before me, quite as though my mind had been a photographic plate, registering every detail. There was a picture on the wall of a roadway bordered by cedars—seven on one side, nine on the other. I counted the cedars, seven and nine, over and over. And when I would count them a certain number of times, forty-one I believe, a boy would come in and read from thin tissue sheets. Names and addresses he'd read. And afterward I'd feel a heavy, sickening joy because your name had not passed his lips.



"The newspapers printed an extra early in the morning"

As long as I live, John, I shall remember a roadway bordered by cedars, seven and nine, and forty-one, and a boy with thin tissue sheets. And quick, almost unbearable relief, something as if I were snatched up and beyond the stars on a spectral elevator.

I thought of other things, too; about the way you lift your chin, and the boyish wave in your hair. And about once when I was angry and the hurt in your eyes—it wrung my heart to remember the hurt in your eyes; I recalled incidents which must have slipped past unnoticed, forgotten years ago. Our life together and my

PRO-GERMAN RUMORS PRONOUNCED ABSURD

Secretary of the Treasury McAdoo has made the following statement, which cannot be circulated too widely:

"My attention has been called to an insidious propaganda that is being carried on, probably by secret agents of Germany, to sow the seeds of distrust in the minds of savings bank depositors by false rumors that the United States Government is contemplating the confiscation of the savings of the people. The absurdity of these statements are manifest. In order, however, to allay the fears of the few who might be alarmed by such reports, I repeat that these rumors are wholly baseless."

life before went by while I counted the cedars in the picture.

I imagine the other women felt as I did. A beautiful girl turned stricken, topaz-colored eyes to me and talked in a voice so tense that it made me feel as if her throat were dead.

"I drove him away," she said. "I earned a big salary—bigger than his—and after we were married and I had to go without, I wasn't contented. I thought I wanted to go to work again and be free and so I left



"I'd feel a heavy, sickening joy, because your name had not passed his lips"

him. If he ever comes back and will forgive me—and her dead throat moved, but no sound came.

You probably remember the maid we had before Annie—Biddy of the joyous flapjacks. She was there, too, grotesque with hair coming down and a beflowered hat on one side, yet pitifully dignified with tears on her cheeks.

"He was such a lad, ma'am, with his bit of a song and dance every evenin' and always askin' for lamb stew. Sure, I got sick of cookin' it. We had it that often and 'twas hurt to the soul he was—me laddy, me laddy!"

You see we are all about the same. An old woman, who has three sons. Over there kept twisting her hands. She did it the same as I twist mine when I am rubbing in cold cream. Only her hands were so hopeless and tired looking with big purple veins.

A very small and very white woman kept whispering, "God!" She crumpled, unconscious, when it was over.

It was over finally. In the evening, after the news had flowed through many editions to a waiting city, the boy came in with official reports. The number of lost had dwindled from hundreds to fifty-three and the list named no one from Cleveland.

I don't remember how I got out of the office. On the corner of Euclid Avenue I met Mr. Ballard—is he president or director of your firm? I've never liked him before, but now I am sure I have done him an injustice. He called a taxi and brought me home and was wonderfully tactful.

After he'd gone I brought out my "Pandora box," wrongfully named, for it holds all the letters you ever have written me, dearest.

I read them all, beginning with the note you passed down the aisle in the Eighth grade—remember?—and ending with the line you mailed from New York after you had said farewell.

I could find no words to write you then. Even now I am dumb, though with the dumbness of gratitude. This morning I found gray hairs over my temples. But I don't mind. How brightly the stars shine to-night!

HOPE.

BUY A BOND!

I've got my marching orders, soon I will cross the pond,
 To take a chance in La Belle France, my overseas hat's donned.
 Before I go, I think you know, I'll buy a Fourth Loan Bond!

CONGENIAL WORK

"Would you be willing to work your way through college?"
 "I wouldn't mind working my way through a girls' college, dad."—Judge.

A CRUEL AWAKENING

I dreamt I dwelt in marble halls,
 And slept on feathers light as day;
 But when I woke, by bugle calls,
 My bedsack was filled with hay.



"A ruthless foe has made his last appearance and except the want and destruction in his retreat, has burned and plundered his last village on French soil."—Ambassador Sharp.

"General Lafayette, true general and talented officer, through the ceaseless vigil at Valley Forge and the trying times to come, lent his priceless energy and ability without stint, and from these beginnings have sprung our great Democracy, whose might, desire and willingness are today directed towards securing for France the return of these same blessings."—Admiral Sims.

"The Germans will beg for peace—a peace we will only give if it will be a complete victory for you and for us."—Marcel Knecht, one of the French High Commission.

"Heaven be blessed! There will be no German victory."—Ambassador Jusserand of France.

"On the Marne, France defended not only her own threatened liberty, but the injured rights of mankind itself."—President Poincare of France.

"We will continue to speak in the language that comes from the cannon's mouth until we have achieved a military decision."—Secretary of the Interior, Franklin K. Lane.

"When a German official communique announces that that river (the Rhine) now stands before the German lines, the people at home in Germany will begin to understand what is going to happen."—Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler.

"To speak for France at any time is an honor."—Cardinal O'Connell, Archbishop of Boston.

THE SICK MAN OF EUROPE!

