Letters From A Soldier's Wife

Dear:

Six weeks since your last letter—and I am beginning to be haunted by the chill, waiting ghost of fear. Brooke Thomas says the delay is quite natural and that of course you are all right, and he even laughs at me a little. But, oh, my dear!

Every scrap of information we get tells of the Americans advancing. And I know you are out on the front, pushing ahead, steadily, grimly. I know it as if I were there to see!

Sometimes I do see; at night when my eyes are closed I have a vision of you, tall and proud, rushing forward. Others follow you and there are ragged jets of flame and sudden, vivid flashes. Your chin is up and your head thrown back—characteristic of you in the turmoil.

The picture comes every night. It encourages me to believe that perhaps love may do what science cannot yet accomplish; that perhaps it may carry hope and confidence fresh from women like myself to you Over there, helping you.

"Thy voice is heard through rolling drums
That beat to battle where he stands;
Thy face across his fancy comes
And gives the battle to his hands."

Remember the poet's song, dear? Lovely Tennyson, who "dipt into the future," spoke prophetic truth on more things than just the "nation's wooden navies" and their "rain of ghost-flow."

I shall try to be unafraid and strong. I cannot afford to be afraid, for fear kills everything good.

Cleveland is raging anew against the unspeakable barbarity which sends hospital ships and tortures dy-

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ing men. This last tragedy touched the Auxiliary directly. Mrs. Murray, one of the members, has a guest whose son went down with the ship. Her husband died at Verdun, and the boy was all she had. She was working with us when the news came. She didn't cry out or speak or weep. But never shall I see such anguish as was in her eyes.

Later I helped her gather up the broken threads and plan what she might make of them.

"You see," she said, "I'm the only one left to carry on. I have money enough to do something, and what can I do best?"

She is over fifty, and, like myself, always has been "at home." The idea finally came to me.

"Why not give talks on "How to Beat the Kaiser at Home"? I suggested. And I outlined a plan for exposing such malicious reports as the Kaiser's agents have spread around, his like the one about Red Cross workers selling sweaters knit for soldiers. There are a hundred and one already traced back to German propagandists, according to the Public Information Committee at Washington. Of course there will be others.

She was quite satisfied with the

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plan. She will go from city to city here and then to England, and with her pluck and sincerity and the romance of sadness about her, I am sure she will "carry on."

The house has seemed more than ever desolate these last couple of weeks, but that is because I have been afraid. I have had your easy chair reupholstered in old blue tapestry, and Betty and I are making a shade of old blue for the reading lamp. It all is waiting for you.

Betty is not robust as she was last year. I believe she is unhappy because of your absence, although she doesn't speak of it. Her nature and yours are the same; still water flowing deep, with infinite capacity for joy or pain. And being only six, she is inarticulate.

I don't know what to think of Clara Henselsen, my maid. You will remember I wrote that Annie was ill and this girl taking her place. She is extremely peculiar. She appears plodding and stupid, though a good worker. But several times I have seen her suddenly keen, almost brilliant. Once was when she ordered someone away from the back door, a tramp I presume, though I didn't see. Also she eternally is slipping out at all hours of the day and night. If she were not so competent I would let her go. But good maids are rare persons these days.

Mr. Ballard continues to shower us with kindness. He dropped in here a couple of times and met Mrs. Thomas. She felt the same dislike toward him that I felt at first. He says rather vague things about being unhappy; perhaps he is misunderstood.

Good-night, John dearest! Tonight the vision of you and your comrades will come again to comfort me. May the "God of our far-flung battle line" care for you. HOPE.

AMERICAN SOLDIERS CARRY PACKS WEIGHING 70 POUNDS

The marching equipment of the American soldier overseas weighs about seventy pounds, and when it is strapped in place not much of the olive drab uniform remains visible except trench cap and leggings.

On his back, which, with the help of his neck and shoulders, bears most of the weight, the soldier carries a shelter half, haversack, trench helmet, trench tool and blanket roll. Strapped to his ammunition belt are a canteen and first aid package at the right and sheathed bayonet at the left.

The mess kit containing knife, fork, spoon, cup and a combination frying pan and plate, all of aluminum, is suspended at one end of a strap, which passes behind the neck and crossing over the chest hangs below the waist. On the other end of the strap are the special tools of the soldier's branch of the army—the wires and pincers of the Signal Corps or the wrench and jack of the Engineers.

The shelter half or pup tent is so named because it makes half of a tent in which there is just room for two men to bunk. Rations and personal belongings, such as soap, tooth brush, cigarettes and underwear, are carried in the haversack. Most extra clothing, however, is put in a dunnage bag, which travels on a supply wagon.

Blankets are rolled in a waterproof slicker and the canteen is encased in a canvass cover, which keeps the water cool.

THE HOME FOLKS

Will not only appreciate copies of Trench and Camp, but will keep them for you until you return from Over There. If you haven't formed the habit of sending Trench and Camp to your mother start today. If you have formed the habit, "continue the exercise."

RIGHTO, MY LAD

With anger in their souls, hatred in their hearts,
Contempt for curs who mask as men—the U. S. army starts.
He marks his trunks for Berlin, and never doubts they'll go,
Can anything deter such men? Bright echo answers—No!"

"Germany will have to redeem her character."—President Wilson.

"If we can't lick these squareheads we should never show our faces back in America again."—Corporal T. R. Nulty, 77th Division, U. S. A.

"We are a small nation, but we gave what we had."—E. de Cartier, Belgian Minister to the United States.

"We have reached the summit of the war and are now going down the slope."—Marshal Ferdinand Foch.

"We must keep the home push up for Pershing."—Secretary of the Treasury William G. McAdoo.

"Now that we have the upper hand, there must be no stopping."—Duke of Aosta, commander of the Third Italian Army.

"On my calendar in Washington there is recorded an engagement, no date yet set, to go with the Marine Band when it marches in the triumphal entry of General Pershing's victorious army into Berlin."—Secretary of Navy Josephus Daniels.