

Letters From A Soldier's Wife

John, my Dearest:
How blind you are! I waited for your letter, counting the days, and now it has brushed away my fears and applauded my earnestness and laughed at me a little. I was over-rought after the scene with Mr. Ballard. And now you write this:

"We chaps who were associated with him always considered him a man of affairs—feminine affairs. When you wrote he'd been hanging round I was sore at first; afterward I thought if his friendliness made things any easier for you it was all right with me. I wasn't worried about complications, because I know you."

Those last three words, John, have comforted me more than anything you could have said. I should have known that your faith is the kind which holds no doubt. Nevertheless, the experience taught its lesson and I am beginning to study people I meet and actually find myself enjoying the prospect of meeting new people for that. I hope I am broadening. Anyway, the more I learn the more I am sure that being "just a good home-maker" is unfair to everybody in any home, most of all the wife.

Cleveland is beginning to blossom with service flags. There is hardly a square upon which many do not show, from the picture homes above the lake in Clifton Park to the palace on the Heights, far across the city. Throughout the streets in between they appear with dignity and pride. It seems as if they form a sort of bond between the great and lowly.

Dear, I have adopted a grandmother. Don't smile; she is quite real. She makes patchwork quilts and potato-bread, such as is a blissful memory of my childhood, and in her tiny garden there is a great asparagus tree and a thousand-leaf rose and a patch of bleeding-heart.



And in the window a service flag.

She knits endlessly, which of course everybody else does just how. But she knits as did the old grandmother whom I barely remember—by the touch system—for her eyes are much too dim to see the stitches. She is a most satisfactory acquisition. And this is how it happened.

I was roaming along Clark Avenue the other day—down toward the poorer part, near Twenty-eighth Street. There was a tiny house right on the street, and in the window a service flag. But not the sort I've just written about; there was a gold star on the border of this one.

It was the first I had seen, and its message, so eloquent and so sad, wrung my heart. I hesitated just a minute and then opened the gate and went round through the little garden to the whitely scrubbed steps and knocked at the little door. And the little old woman with her thin white hair and her big, wishful blue eyes, is the owner, resident and mistress of the cottage. Her only companion is a huge yellow tabby who sleeps all the time under the kitchen board.

I told her that I am a soldier's wife and why I had come in. She

was so lovable! But when she began to tell about her boy—a grandson he was and only twenty-two—she rested her old head on her old hands and wept, the racking, difficult tears of age, drowsy as winter rain. When she told her story I found it was not for her loss she grieved, but for the eternal welfare of the young hero commemorated by the gold star!

There were children and other grandchildren. I gathered all eager to take her into their households. But sturdy of mind and independent of spirit, she clung to the little house where she and "granpa" lived to the day of his death. "Jamie" always had been her favorite.



She is visiting me to-day and at this minute is sitting in your easy chair knitting you a helmet.

it, so he came to live there too, and they took care of each other and were real pals.

When war was declared he left his position and enlisted. Not against her wishes, though. Almost every evening he read the newspapers to her and she knew what was what about the war! He enlisted and sailed away and fought gloriously. He'd been cited for bravery and won a cross. And he died gloriously, as he fought. Her old eyes shone through her tears.

"Then why do you grieve for him?" I asked her. "Sorely you believe in time to be we shall meet those we love and not be separated. It won't be long for you—"

She kept turning over and over a corner of her gingham apron. There was something wistful in the movement, as though she longed for something and dared not ask it.

"Jamie was just a mite headstrong," she explained. "He promised an' promised to declare for the Lord an' go into the church. If he'd o' done that everything'd seem sort o' different now. He'd o' given up worldly things—"

"But, dearie, he couldn't have done anything very bad. What should he have given up?"

"He smoked a good bit—" she began uncertainly.

"But, Gran'ma dear" (you see, I fell into the atmosphere directly). "Is there one single thing in the Bible against smoking? Think of the happiness that sometimes lies in a few dried leaves. Just little leaves, something the same as those you make tea with—and a cup of tea isn't sinful, is it?"

I convinced her finally. But there was something else.

"A wee swear word, mayhap, when the boy was angry—"

I wanted to laugh, John, but I didn't dare. I put up the last argument I could think of.

"If he were quite perfect he'd have been too good for this earth, and there never was but one such man—Christ!"

That argument won. I don't know what I'd have done if it hadn't. Exquisite peace came into her old eyes and I adopted her on the spot. She is visiting me to-day, and at this minute is sitting in your easy chair, knitting you a helmet.

The kiddies still are in the country. All of my love, dear. HOPE.

THE VANISHING LINE

An Irish drill sergeant was putting a lot of green recruits through the different movements. He gave them "Right Dress." Try as he would, he couldn't get a straight line. Finally in exasperation he shouted:

"What's the mather wid ye? Can't ye line up? That line is as crooked as a corkscrew. All of ye fall out and take a look at it!"—Judge.

YOU CAN KEEP

The home folks advised us to your life and activities in camp by sending all your copies of "Trench and Camp" to them. Why not?

MISTAKEN IDENTITY

Inspecting Officer—Where is your other leather glove?

Rookie—I et it, sir.

Inspecting Officer (astounded)—Explain yourself.

Rookie—I had it in my mess kit, sir, and forgot to take it out this morning before breakfast. We had flapjacks and I thought it was one of 'em until I come to the buttons.—Judge.

SOME SLINGER.

I used to play at center field. Until in war the whole world reeled; I went to France, and now, ye gods, You oughta see me throw grenades!



"We are going to win this war, whatever it costs."—Speaker Champ Clark.

"The destinies of the world and the hopes of civilization are centered upon America."—Secretary of Treasury W. G. McAdoo.

"There is only one kind of a Germany that will cease to menace the world, and that is a chastened, defeated Germany."—Henry Morgenthau, former American Ambassador to Turkey.

"The sacrifices our troops are daily making for the nation are adding glorious pages to her history."—General John J. Pershing, commanding the American Expeditionary Force in France.

"Fight the next war now."—Newspaper headline.

"The ardor of the fighting line must not be cooled."—Secretary of War Baker.

"We cannot imperil the ascendancy we have gained on sea and land or give breathing time to an enemy who could not be trusted to observe either the rules of honor or humanity."—Herbert H. Asquith, former Premier of England.

"I welcome to France the gallant soldiers of America who are coming to participate in the battle of Nations for right and justice against the Empires of prey."—Marshal Foch's official message to American soldiers expressed through "Going Over," the embarkation newspaper.

TORCH IN HAND, THE ENEMY COMES OFFERING PEACE.

