

Letters From A Soldier's Wife

Dear John:  
Do you remember the night—very  
clear and it seems now—when we sat  
on the topmost deck of a Lake steamer  
and made up stories about the

It was July and the sun had slipped  
down the side of a blazing copper  
mountain and dropped off the edge. Eve-  
ning came like a woman out of  
the East, perfumed, softly dusk, breath-  
ing enchantment. The water was  
blue-tipped and endless and the sky  
was purple velvet. It was just above  
with its white, white stars—so  
clear we were swept by the winds  
coming through its spaces.

On a quiet night, John!  
I do you remember the last  
time, dear, the one we made up to-  
gether and liked best of all. We  
were on the stars were souls of little  
children, all on their way toward  
heaven. Gusty winds were angels'  
wings, bearing tiny, bright spirits to  
small bodies preparing to receive  
them. Some far, some near; all  
straight from heaven.

There was one, not far distant, and  
you said: "This is coming to us—a  
little daughter, I think—" and  
there was another and you laughed  
and said: "Shan't she have a sis-  
ter?"

Dear, there was a star, deep in the  
blue night. I glimpsed it, and won-  
dered at its lofty splendor. More dis-  
tant, longer on the way, but also  
coming to us in the spirit of a little  
child.

I have not written before because  
I wouldn't have you apprehensive. It  
is useless to say that I am altogether  
happy; I can't be without you. I am  
looking forward with all the confi-

Gran'ma who comforts me most. Her  
little, bent figure tiptoeing round the  
house is curiously romantic. She  
brings me little jars of old-fashioned  
preserves and big bunches of larkspur  
from her garden. She knows all the  
traditions of time agoes connected  
with such occasions, and she takes  
great care that they are observed in  
this house.

What I enjoy most are her Scrip-  
ture readings. She possesses the in-  
timate knowledge of biblical charac-  
ters that I possess of personal friends.  
She has a sense of the dramatic, too,  
and her stories are real.



She brings me little jars of old-fash-  
ioned preserves

It isn't just the entertainment I  
like though, but a feeling of peace it  
brings. It recalls my little-girlhood  
at Grandfather's, where family wor-  
ship followed breakfast, and my own  
grandmother sometimes told the stor-  
ies this little grandma tells.

I wonder if it isn't always so, John  
—turning back to childhood and the  
impressions of it before danger and  
dread?

I walked with Brooke Thomas the  
other evening, past a church on the  
corner of Detroit Street. There was a  
sign near the door announcing a spe-  
cial welcome for soldiers and sailors.  
I wondered if soldiers and sailors, so  
often from small towns and a bit daz-  
zled by the city, take heed of such  
welcomes. It seems more natural  
for them to seek amusement.

"You'd be surprised at the num-  
ber attending divine services—ones  
who look as if they'd never been in-  
side a church before," Brooke Thomas  
said. "I saw dozens of them in New  
York and Paris churches. You're to  
understand by my saying so that I  
was one," he laughed.

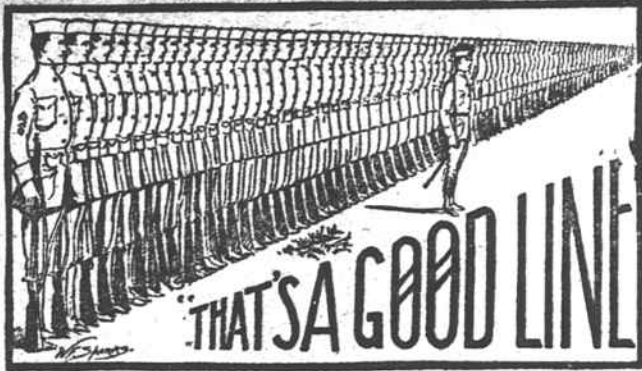
"It's reversion to childhood teach-  
ings," he went on; "with death star-  
ing you in the face, you remember  
spiritual things. You remember and  
cling—take it from me. I've heard  
soldiers praying in the trenches—kid  
prayers!"

I thought of it afterward when I  
saw that Halloran boy bare his head  
before St. Patrick's. He is in uniform  
and apparently has given up all am-  
bition to be an outlaw.

Strange, isn't it, that war should  
induce a sense of the abstract and  
spiritual? Do you think that the  
Infinite Scheme permits war for such  
a purpose?

Betty and Ruth still are in the  
country with your mother. They are  
almost violently well, she writes, and  
full of love for father.

This will be the last letter for a  
while, dear. Mrs. Thomas will send  
you a message. My dear, dear boy!  
All of my love always! HOPE.



"Think war, talk war, make war."—Bernard Baruch, chairman of  
the War Industries Board.

"For discipline, smartness and general physique, they are not ex-  
celled by any troops in the world."—Tribute paid to U. S.  
Marines by Captain Bruce Bairnsfather, of the British Army.

"The American pep got the Germans' goat."—Lieutenant Harold  
E. Finn, Fifty-third Pioneer Regiment, U. S. Army.

"We are near the end of sacrifices imposed by savage aggression  
for which its authors try to escape responsibility."—Stephen  
Pichon, Foreign Minister of France.

"All that America has done has been clean, open and honorable."—  
George Creel, Chairman of the Committee on Public Informa-  
tion.

"The whole country is behind you with all it possesses."—Secre-  
tary Baker to the American soldiers Over There.

"We are giving it to the Huns fifty times harder than we are re-  
ceiving it."—Private Ross M. Williams, American Expedition-  
ary Forces, Somewhere in France.

"I thought rabbits could run before I saw the Hun in retreat;  
cottontails are snails in comparison."—Sergeant John R. Dick-  
son, American Expeditionary Force.



It was July and the sun had slipped  
down the side of a blazing copper  
mountain and dropped off the edge.

dear I can, but, oh, John, I want  
you!

I keep thinking about the other  
times, how kind you were and how  
just knowing you were here took  
away all terror. My bravery is slip-  
ping away. You see I have had to  
give up most of the Auxiliary work,  
so there is nothing to remind me of  
newly acquired confidence. Annie is  
back, taking care of the house and  
making me comfortable. But there  
always is the longing for you. Con-  
tinually I hear the sound of your  
voice, feel the touch of your hand.  
Wherever you are, marching on tat-  
tered roads, or waiting in the trench-  
es, you must feel my thoughts and my  
love, for I am with you in spirit al-  
ways, always.

Without Mrs. Thomas, who is like  
my own mother, and the little old  
Gran'ma, whom I adopted, it would  
be so much harder. Oddly it's

The Game

By Earl Baldwin Thomas

There's a green field back of my garden, where the turf runs smooth and fair,  
But only a dream of my comrades who used to be playing there,  
Now the shrill high call of the signals no longer is ringing out.

For it's over the top at dawn,  
God! It's over the top at dawn,  
To the charge of the deadly rout.

The turf it is sweet and untrod-  
den, the grass grows on to seed,  
The cleats of the stalwart players no longer tramp the weed,  
But the halfback still is plunging, and the tackle charges through.

For it's over the top at dawn,  
Stark mad to the charge at dawn,  
Through the gas for me and you.

For war is a far-flung gridiron, with its chalklines marked in red,  
And the quarterback flings his signals, the guards fight on till dead,  
And the stars glow down on the gridiron where they crouch along the ends.

For it's over the top at dawn,  
A dash through the line, at dawn,  
The steely foe gives and bends.

There's a green field back of my garden, where the turf is gay and fair,  
Of my hero-comrades who used to be playing there?  
Plunging yet in the battle, the line back still holds good,  
And it's over the top at dawn.

Oh, it's over the top at dawn—  
God, as I knew they would!

