

FACTS AND FANCIES FOR WOMAN AND THE HOME CIRCLE

THE DAILY SHORT STORY

"A LETTER TO MR. SOMEBODY."

By LOUISE OLIVER.
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PHILIP SAT thoughtfully down on the fire-step of the trench. The German musketry had ceased for the time and all was quiet along the line. Three of the men in his platoon had been wounded and taken back to the first-aid stations behind the line. But he hadn't a scratch.

Beside him, crouching in a variety of attitudes, were five of the boys playing cards. Someone had produced a dog-eared, muddy pack, and now they were having a round of jack pots. The entire crowd had an aggregate of less than a dollar, all told.

"Come on in, Pearson, the betting's fine," called Dorgan. "Sky's the limit!" But Philip shook his head. "It hurts my finer feelings to see my fellow boys risking their immortal souls. I can't be a party to the outrage. Besides, I'm broke."

"Poor Phil!" Dorgan drew three cards. "Lonely again."

"Who's he got to be lonely for?" Kearney, new to the company, didn't know Phil's history.

"Nobody. That's the trouble. We cusses here think we're killed because we can't see our folks. But did you ever think what it meant not to have any home folks to get homesick for? That's Phil's trouble. He just naturally hasn't got anybody. That's what he's thinking this minute. I'll bet a fifty. Never gets any mail—never hears from anyone. By George, here comes Sandy now with letters! Hurray! The mail's in, Jimmy! All those for me, chaplain? Well, this is my day."

Philip sat stolidly on the fire-step without moving. He knew the chaplain had no mail for him. All the other boys were busily tearing open letters and papers and hungrily devouring every word.

Then the chaplain stopped in front of him and put a hand on his shoulder. "My boy, I wonder if—" He put his other hand in his pocket and drew out a letter. "I don't approve of this—much. I don't have any idea what's inside, but I'm going to leave it with you."

Philip took the letter eagerly and scanned the address. It was written in a rather angular feminine hand on plain white paper and directed to: MR. SOMEBODY,

American Expeditionary Forces, France.

Fuzzled, he hid his trench knife under the flap and drew out the closely written folded pages. The letter began: "Dear Mr. Somebody:—Before you read my letter I'm going to ask whether or not you are getting mail from home and friends. If you are, will you please give this to someone who is not, for this is not your letter, then, but his. I am writing to a lonely man who has no one to care about him—not to you."

Philip paused. Strange that the chaplain had followed the directions so closely without divining the contents. He turned again to the letter. Surely the letter had reached its intended destination. Who else had a better right to it than he? Then suddenly a revulsion of feeling seized him. He didn't want sympathy, he didn't want to read a lot of Sunday School stuff about patiently bearing one's lot and being sustained by pride in what he was doing.

His eyes ran rebelliously over the next few words, then he read more eagerly and before he knew it—but let us read the letter.

"First of all," it ran, "I'm going to wish a family onto you. Mr. Somebody—my family. And I'm going to tell you all about what we've been doing. Maybe you'll want to hear about them and maybe you won't, but I absolutely refuse to sympathize with your loneliness and write consoling things like that. And as I have to have something to put into a letter, it will just have to be the family, so you'll have to be patient. And I'm not going to introduce them. I will speak of them as though you'd known us all forever."

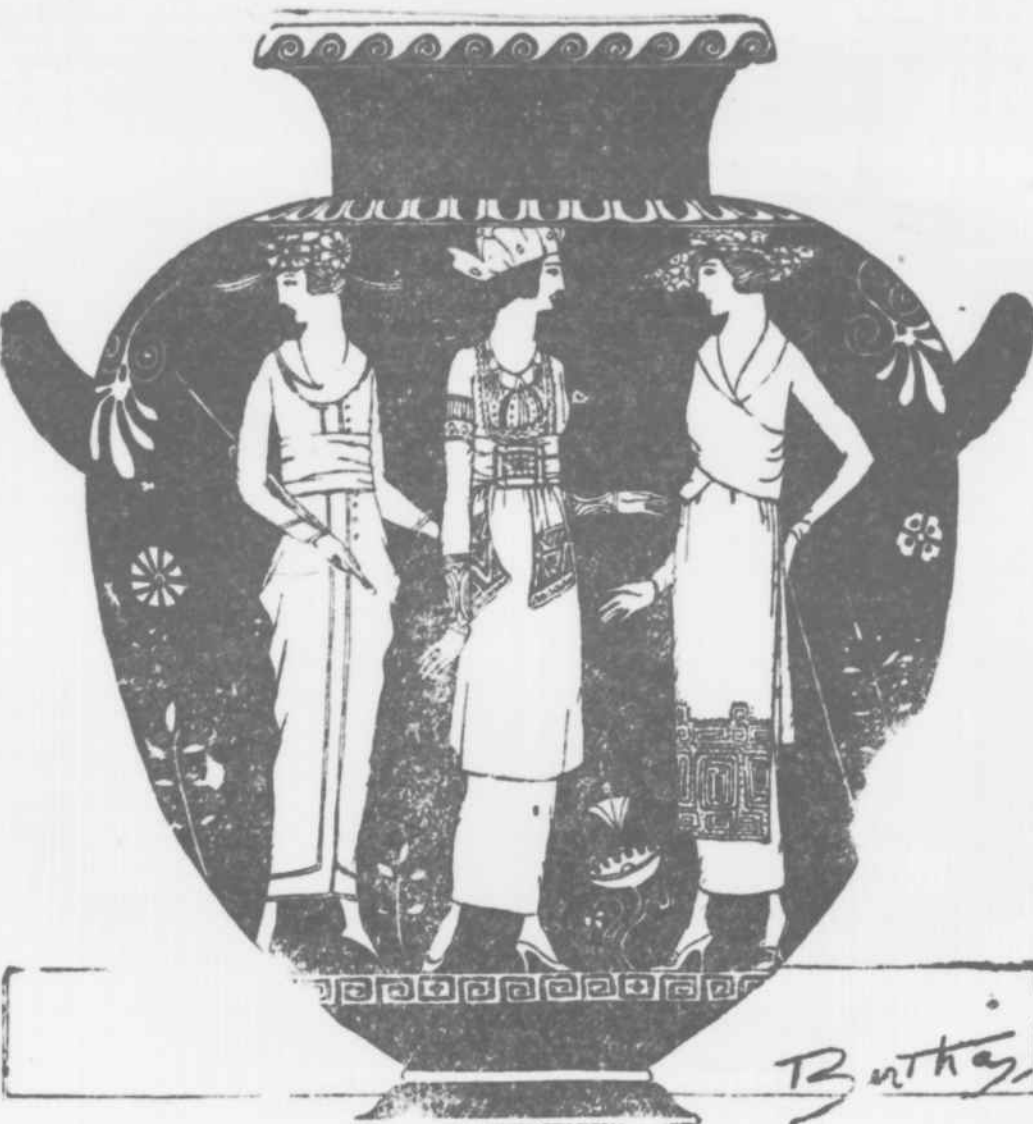
"To begin, Mr. Peabody finally came across and gave Dad the position as department head that he should have had years ago. Oh, you don't know what it meant to us! Or, I forget, you do know, of course. When Dad came home that night and told us, Buddy stood right up in the middle of the dining-room table and started to recite Webster's oration, knocking over my vase of clove shrub, the first out of the garden, and ruining a bran clean table cloth that had taken me forty-seven minutes to iron. But I was in a forgiving humor, of course, and merely hissed him and ordered him down. Zetty gave Dad a hug that nearly strangled him and marched right upstairs and returned with every one—every one—mind you, of her old dress—every one—mind you, of her old dress—over her arm."

"Now, Sis," she demanded, "can't I give these to the poor Harbinsons right away and get that pink embroidered voile and the Feter Tom suit tomorrow?"

"I was ready to promise anything, my dear sir, but all the while I was thinking how fine it would be to have the money for the gas and milk and butcher and grocery man without Dad's having to sit up till midnight figuring how to make the money stretch."

"Well, that's that. Already Dad looks ten years younger, and last night when he was shaving I heard him whistling. Wasn't it wonderful?" "The Emerys next door are having their house painted with mahogany trimming. It was a dear of a house before they bought it and looked so lovely white. But Mr. Emery had made a fortune in munitions and he's building a stone addition to it. Imagine! Some way I think houses are like people, don't you? I mean, they show what kind of people live in them. Our house looks like the home of poor gentles, as we're usually called. Vines and things growing up to hide places where we need a carpenter and painter. It's the shoes on an old pair of shoes, but I think if one's shoes are old, it's

SKIMPY SKIRTS? NO! IT'S EARLY EGYPTIAN INFLUENCE.



Fall fashions for woolless days are a "throwback" to the modes of Cleopatra and her Egyptian sisters. Scant skirts, straight lines, and brilliant embroidery achieve the art museum effect—and save wool.

BY BETTY BROWN.

Curio collectors, art critics, et al, are ardent admirers of fashionable ladies who strut around expensive vases in skimpy skirts. So are the fall fashion designers, who have transformed a perfectly good American wool dress into an "early Egyptian influence" on the hapless feminine silhouette. Our clever artist has sketched three of the newest costumes designed by Hertha to prove that a maiden of 1918 observing a woolless day can get a perfect Cleopatra's

better to have them polished than not, don't you?

"But talking of the house and vines brings me to my hobby. My garden—I don't know whether you like flowers or not—but I just have to tell you about it. I've now I'm writing out here in an old green swing under a pink heaven of blossoms. The trees are all out and the birds are fairly bursting their little throats for joy."

"And the bed of white and red tulips over the fence is blooming so bravely—it is as good as a sermon on courage. And over by the shed—but of course you can't see the shed for the bushes. I'll just have to tell you it's there—the lilacs are coming out. Can't you smell that exquisite deliciousness away over there in your trench? Surely Heaven will have hedges of lilacs. And the shrubs are out—the snowballs a lovely tender greenish white. How I wish you could see it, Mr. Somebody."

"And now, I'm going to tell you a secret. I hadn't intended to, but somehow I feel that you are sympathetic, that you'll understand."

"I have a soldier, a lonely soldier. He must be away over in France, and it is my fault he is lonely, for we quarreled and he went away, and now I can't find out where he is? So after all, this is his letter you are getting. Oh, I wish someone would write to him—for he is lonely, I know. He had nobody but me. And, oh, if I only knew, so I could ask him to forgive."

"This is all for this time, Mr. Somebody. If you like my letter and send me your name and address, I'll write again."

"Faithfully yours, Elizabeth Downing, Somerset, Mass."

This was Philip's answer: "Dearest Little Betty—Mr. Somebody got your letter, and what do you think? It was I. You see God must have guided it here. So you want me to forgive you, sweetheart. Dearest, I'm not fit to kiss the hem of your dainty little dress. I adore you and always will. But since I got your letter I determined to live and go back to you. Before, I resented every crack the other fellows got instead of me. There, the post's going out and I must send this, but I'll write every day. Good-bye, dearest girl. Forever yours, Philip."

Miss Ivie Lake, of Gladly Creek, called on her cousin, Mrs. Ella Henderson, Saturday night.

CONFESSIONS OF A WIFE

It is a queer thing, little book, to see with what joy Richard Waverly III welcomes Jim Edie. He seems to be the only person for whom he will willingly leave my arms and Jim is the only person to whom my boy will vouchsafe that peculiar little crooked smile that was one of his father's bequests to him.

Even to me, he has another little crooked lifting of the lip that is adorable, of course, but not like Dick's smile at all.

Jim stopped at the house this morning on his way down town and immediately Dicky, who had been calmly sucking his big toe while I was getting his bath water the proper temperature, began to crow and try to wriggle himself off the bed toward him.

Jim, immensely flattered and pleased went over to where "this little nakedness" was displayed among the blankets, his tiny restless feet had kicked off of himself, and wrapping him carefully in his blankets, held him out at arms' length in a way that made me shudder. But Dicky blessed bit of humanity, it seemed to give him unholy joy.

"I tell you what old man, your Uncle Jim simply has to come around once in a while and show you the ways of red-blooded masculinity. Otherwise, this mother of yours will be making you a regular mollycoddle," Jim said as I remonstrated with him for treating Dicky so roughly.

"What you need, Dick, my boy, it a man to help bring you up."

As Jim said this, I discovered a wry eye cast in my direction.

"Surely, Uncle Jim, you do not think," I said demurely, "there has been a dearth of men trying to help in Dicky's education lately?"

"There have been too darn many," said Jim under his breath—but I caught his words.

"I do not think that a man who swears before my helpless child is one who should be given wholly in charge of his education," I said primly.

This tickled Jim's sense of humor and he laughed more wholeheartedly than I had heard him since Dick died.

"If your child is 'helpless,' Margie, you will also acknowledge that he is unconscious," he said as he placed him

in my lap and prepared to sit down for a chat.

"Get out of here, Jim," I commanded "I want to bathe Dicky and put him to sleep."

"Can't you do it while I am here? I am sure it is one of the best little things you do."

"My dear Jim, bathing and dressing Dicky is a sacred rite that has to be a bit of a secret devotion. Besides, what would I do if when he was nicely soaped and in the tub he caught sight of you and demanded to be tossed up in a blanket again?"

"Why just let him be tossed up, of course," agreed Jim.

"Go along to your work, man, bathing babies is woman's work."

As Jim passed through the long French windows of the sun room, I thought of the admission I had just inadvertently made.

"Bathing babies is woman's work."

Is there a man who would be wise enough to bathe a baby? Not very many. I am afraid, and it seems to me that a man rather prides himself on not knowing how to take care of children.

Nature has said that women shall bear children and man has been perfectly willing that woman should care for them until they are big enough at least to give themselves physical care.

It is like many other duties that men gladly turn over to women. I have never heard a man say he

would be glad to take care of a home. In fact, I have known but few men who took any interest in the care of a home in any way. It has always seemed to me that having relegated women to the home, man has proceeded to lose interest in any work pertaining to it.

ECONOMY COLUMN.

A nation at war makes three distinct demands on its individual citizens—sacrifice, service and economy.

All sacrifice. Some sacrifice their own lives or lives dear to them in actual military service; others sacrifice material prosperity, and all sacrifice personal comforts and pleasures which seemed the necessities of peacetime. Sacrifice is easy because all meet it together and each is aware of the participation of others.

All serve. Most forms of service involve group activity, whether it be in the army, in Red Cross or other philanthropic work, or in active industrial service. No individual grudges services because all individuals give it.

But economy is harder. Economy is the most personal and the most difficult form of patriotism. It is hard, it is monotonous, it is unspacious, and involves all the firm qualities demanded by sacrifice and service without the inspiration of co-operation and recognition. We serve and sacrifice together; we economize alone.

The family is the primary and most important social group, and in America, as the result of custom, the woman head of the household is the distributor of funds—the spender of the family income.

Here is one of the newest and best definitions of economy which the housewife would do well to ponder.

"Economy is not the cessation of spending, rather it is the elimination of those fanciful and wasteful expenditures which add to the cost of living without adding to its joys."

The immediate result of eliminating the cost of non-essentials is the appearance of a surplus fund, a safety-margin for use when emergency shall produce an essential not otherwise provided for.

For instance, in peace times we consumed five pounds of sugar per person each month. At war prices that sugar cost 50 cents. Now we are reduced to a sugar ration of two pounds each month—an involuntary saving of 30 cents. That surplus 30 cents SAVED and not simply diverted to another expense channel represents real economy.

In the same way we have reduced the family expense for meat, and for white flour, and for candy. The money saved effected will be as much a patriotic service as the food saving—but it must be actually SAVED and invested in bonds or thrift stamps if it is economy and not simply transferred expense.

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FIRST SHOWING OF FALL MILLINERY



Osgood's for Quality

Evening Chat

Vacation experiences are much alike whether they occur at the mountains, the sea shore or in the country. I saw a brown robin just now. He bent over and ran across the room, his two legs looking like black twigs. He stopped often and looked about his tail, dragging in the dust. Over he bent again, his tail coming up. On he went again, nothing escaping his head like eyes. Goodness, he's stopped again, his tail going down. I wouldn't have noticed tail up and tail down again if I were home. That's one thing vacation does to you; it gives you better eyes.

I believe there are hundreds of birds where I am and because of the many trees, there are many wood peckers. "Tap, tap, tap." Who's pounding so early in the morning?

I peeped out of my window and I saw his red head. What a beauty! What a picture as he circled the tree so close to my window and pounded so unconcernedly. Some people think he is looking for a soft place, but I don't believe it. It's merely his way of talking; something like telegraphic communication, and I can hear other wood peckers answering all through the woods.

black with warning, the rain comes down in torrents. Just a moment before, however, there has been a silence like the drawing in of one's breath before a scream, like the silence before midnight or the very hush before a storm, we've so often experienced. With the rain comes the splash of wet leaves and branches, the bending and whirl of many boughs, the noise of the drip, drip on dusty roads and the rumble of that deep voice in the skies. Rain in the mountains is an awe-inspiring spectacle.

I followed a brown ribbon of a road today until I reached a blue lake at the end of it, which wasn't a lake at all but just a bit of the mountains shining blue in the lazy atmosphere.

Across my ribbon road the trees joined hands and we small people below, really grown up but with hearts of children, walked under as though playing the game "London bridges falling down." The road ran endlessly cool and delightful, every step a new adventure.

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