

out here, and greater than the gift is the thought that there is some one who is thinking of us. I have passed your box of cigarettes all along the trenches, and if you could see our fellows puffing away under a hail of shrapnel you would find yourself amply repaid in the pleasure which you have given them. We are all blessing your name tonight, for we have not had a good smoke for ages."

"What is this signature, my dear?" inquired Miss Lizzie. "It looks like Corp. Richard Barton."

The two ladies examined the signature carefully. "Why, it is his rank—corporal, of course," said Miss Mary. "He must be quite a respectable man to have been made a corporal. You know they are very strict in the English army. A drinking man could never become a corporal."

"But it is sad to think of them abandoned to the habit of tobacco," answered Miss Lizzie. "However—ought we to write back to him, my dear?"

"Would—would it be proper, sister?" asked the other.

"We shall never see him, and perhaps a letter would cheer him up. And then, the poor fellow may be shot."

"Oh, no!" exclaimed Miss Mary in horror.

After a long talk they decided to write Corp. Richard Barton a joint letter, to preserve the proprieties. It was a letter that might have made the irreverent laugh. It dealt with all the small talk of the village, for to the two maiden ladies Bodminton was the world in miniature. From that they passed to earnest inquiries as to the corporal's health. Then in restrained but very fervent language they expressed the hope that he was not given to worldly ways, and above all, that he shunned the use of intoxicants. The letter closed with an earnest request for his worldly and spiritual welfare.

It was seven weeks before this letter reached the recipient, then lying

in the base hospital recovering from a wound. He had been struck by a fragment of a shell while leading his company to the attack, and he would never lead it again, because a tendon in his leg had been severed and "Corp. Richard Barton" must go limping through life thenceforward.

True, the limp was not a very pronounced one, hardly visible, in fact, when the soldier walked, but it is one thing to walk across a drawing room floor and quite another to charge a line of trenches at full speed across barbed wire entanglements, laden with one's accoutrements.

A second letter reached the two ladies in due course. Miss Mary, who was romantically inclined, opened it in the presence of her sister with a thrill of delicious wickedness. Miss Lizzie, however, was inclined to think that Miss Mary had been a little indiscreet. She intended to tell her that in her opinion the correspondence must be brought to a close.

But as the ladies read it they looked at each other in dismay.

"He has been wounded!" exclaimed Miss Mary, tremulously. "The poor man! I hope it is not a serious wound."

"He says it will prevent his going back to the ranks again," Miss Mary announced, as she read farther on. "And—oh, Lizzie, what do you think? He says that some day he may come to America for a visit and that if he does he will take the opportunity to pay a call upon those who were so kind to him!"

The letter fluttered out of her hands and she sat down in a chair breathless.

"Mary!" said her sister severely, "this is what comes of carrying on a flirtation with a strange man!"

"Sister!" gasped Miss Mary. "How can you say such a dreadful thing? Did you ever know me even to think of a man?"

"A common soldier—just a cor-