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"My Dearest Muz"

Paul S. Johnson

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NATIONAL WAR WORK COUNCIL
YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS
OF THE UNITED STATES
"WITH THE COLORS"



March 26, 1918.

Back in my old room at the old place.

My dearest May:—

Well, I got back here yesterday and got at my mail and what a feast there was. Twenty one letters and a package of magazines. They had been mailed all the way from January 2 to March 2. It was as I thought. Some letters that reached here shortly after I went to the front had been held for me. Nobody had gotten enough of two and two together to think of forwarding them. There were four letters in the works from Franc, two from Marian and ~~one~~^{three} from you. Yours were the letters written on Jan. 3, 6 and 23. Your letter mailed on your wedding anniversary reached ~~me~~ me two and a half weeks ago, so you see the letter game has not improved a bit.

I am in a hurry so will have to take the first couple of the five unanswered letters that I now have from you and take the rest in their turn. After a jump like this my pile of unanswered looks more hopeless than ever before but I will try to do my best. Looks as though I would not have a chance to do any preaching immediately so

will use my Sundays for worship and correspondence.

Your letter of Jan. 3 is asking about Christmas and so forth. It seems more like the Fourth by this time. I have told you all the Christmas news long ago so I guess your questions are all answered before this.

I continue to be well fed and I am getting so many clothes packed up that moving is getting to be a problem. I received a note from one of my Oak Park ten year olds saying that her first sweater was on the way to me. Oh my! Now that it is getting warmer you can't even give them away. When it comes it will make eight articles of sweater nature that I have. But I shall hang on to them for when winter comes more than one fellow is going to need them badly.

What has become of Woodie's proposal? They are quite strenuous affairs as I have learned from experience. I hope he gets it over soon either one way or the other.

The "Star" may continue to overlook my valuable articles while I quote an extract from a recent letter from one of my Aninwa ladies. We were so very glad to hear from you. I sent your letter on to the folks at home and this week's Zion Independent Paper (Zion City) has published extracts from it. You


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go and tell your old Stat Springs Star that I am now out of their class and just to "pi" my article or I'll charge them for it.

As you come to know French temperaments you realize the "why" of the French heroine, Joan of Arc. It is to something like that that their romantic natures respond. It is interesting to study war attitudes of different peoples. The French are still fighting the war inspired by romance. To the English it is a not overly agreeable piece of hard work. To the Americans today it is a severe game. The French are actors, stage people, and they fight as such. The English are laborers and they fight as such. The Americans are gamblers and they fight as such. Each way gets results but sometimes one does not quite understand the other. I think of various experiences in my college education for a comparison. I am acting in a play. I work hard, I get results, I do not shirk. The romantic in me is being developed. That is the French. Another day I am beating countless nugs. I work hard, I get results, I do not shirk.

Dogged persistency in me is being developed. That is the English. Another day I am playing football. I work hard, I get results, I do not shirk. I get a fearful wallop in the eye. It hurts terribly. I laugh, grit my teeth and go back. That is the American.

I passed through some country that Napoleon made historic this last week. I saw where he first went to school, etc.

You ask about the war's end. We must either starve Germany or else thoroughly trounce her, perhaps a combination of both, with a preponderance of the later. It is going to mean money and men. If it were only the former it would be such an easy war to bear, but it is going also to mean the later. All of the divisions with which I went did not return. Much over 99% did return. Only ^{very} a few are back there, but the sooner we realize the inevitable I think the more forceful will be our fighting. Lack of funds and judgement in the use of those funds means that American boys will pay the difference in red blood. We are willing to do our share, we are will to do all that is necessary but heaven forbid we should be called upon to do the unnecessary. I know of a case where a Lieutenant came to 60 men and asked for a ^{Volunteer} patrol of 10 men to go out into the Marston. Every one volunteered, and the 50 who were

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not taken were disappointed. We will win this war
sometime, Union of forces will do it in months.

Disunion of forces will necessitate years. The time
element can be worked out into a scale of lives, every
additional month meaning so many of the lives. I know
you are doing more than your share. This should more
properly be addressed to Congress.

A franc in normal times is twenty cents in our
money. Just now it is less than eighteen cents. The
franc price is somewhat smaller than the quarter.

I am so tickled to hear about your coat and
ruff. I am glad somebody else is getting clothes
sent to them besides me.

Yes, our Lawrence Prof is Dr. Naylor. I am
going to speak to him about Mantovone the next time
I see him.

I have not gotten to see Archibald, yet. Pally is
in France now although away on the other side from
me, near the coast. Y.M. people are supposed to
have a week's leave in every 3 months. I have
been here five now. My boss spoke yesterday about

fixing things up for me this time while our troops were on leave. Maybe I can look one of them up then. My little Harvard roommate will get off at the same time. Vice has been a popular place to go. Perhaps we shall go there.

My footwear is not so severe a task as I made it sound. I had them ^{have} ^{all} oiled and they are very comfortable. They are so clodhopperish and clumsy, though. They would make a ball room floor look as though it had been stuccoed. My feet are in fine shape and have not been wet after that first awful six weeks to amount to anything.

You spoke of Kaufman's article. Did I tell you that he rode on the truck with me one morning when he was here? We saw together one of those rows of white painted posts.

I have had a big week. A week ago yesterday our troops started to leave the front. The trip back to rest camp was about 180 miles. The plan was to have the troops go on train for about 150 miles and then march the rest of the way for practice in maneuvering, etc. So my truck was loaded and another fellow and myself were sent to the detraining point with the idea of trying to reach as many of the troops as possible with a

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little something in the way of supplies, cookies, chocolate and cigarettes, chiefly.

We left at 4 P.M. and the next day at 6 P.M. we had covered the 130 miles and were at the detraining point. A nice rain fell on our trip down and laid a pretty heavy dust.

For ~~four~~ ^{five} days we went from place to place. We would pull up in the midst of a bunch, let down the tail board and start to sell. The fellows would quickly form a line. I have seen over 250 men standing in one line. Some places we worked for three hours steady before all would be attended, too. We would then pull up the tail board, drive on three or four miles to the next place and repeat. It was hard work but a heap of fun.

On the afternoon of the fifth day one of my tires came off. My tires are solid rubber, not pneumatic. We had passed a bunch on the road so we waited for them to halt. We sold them and then about nine P.M. started for home. A splendid moon was out and by keeping the wheel on the grass we

Kept from damaging it very much. I had never been over the roads before so we just had to follow the scent. Our warehouse has been moved about 15 miles so when we got there we did not know where to look for a place to sleep and it was 1:30 a.m. so we just pulled out our blanket roll and slept beside the truck. I dug down in my bag, found your blue helmet, which by the way is the same color exactly as my Lemira sweater, put it on and slept like a log till 7:30, so sooner or later I find a use for things.

On my trip from the front down I sent some postals. I have since discovered that I did not put on enough postage so you may not receive them. Save them for me if you do.

They were shelling our tours at the front for a couple of days before I left. For the last ~~couple~~^{few} of days they have been hammering it hard so I left at a fortunate time.

The ^{brown} socks I had when I started are badly worn in the feet but the tops are as good as ever. Do you suppose it would pay to send them home and have new feet knit into them? Mending the yarn would be unnecessary as no one sees them anywhere. Love to you. More next week, Buddy.