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"My Dear Father"

Paul S. Johnson

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AMERICAN



ON ACTIVE SERVICE
WITH THE
AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE

May 26 1918

My dear Father:—

I have a letter from you written March eighth and another just received this past week written ~~March~~ ^{April} nineteenth. I did not mean to let the first go unanswered so long and yet there is little to say in answer to it. It was written just after Mother had gone to Chicago. I admire, first of all, your spirit of fairness and also your spirit of stick-to-itiveness in attempting to meet and cope with the situations immediately at hand. I think I have considerable to learn from you along that line.

I am so glad that the settlement made by the Elevated was satisfactory. Such things as accidents can not be compensated for with anything least of all in dollars and cents, and yet to have the expense that the accident causes covered and then some cash added, the investment of which will give the investor some little pleasure or satisfaction, helps at least to relieve the burden and

often the hard places that stand out in one's memory. I thought so often when I was up at the front of that word "indemnity". What does it mean? How can it be accomplished when you has not even the imagination to picture a just indemnity? How much better to have shot the helpful word into the air than the arrow into the heart of an oak. The helpful word helped to encourage, the arrow helped to blight. Too bad that little verse is not in the Bible. We could preach sermons on it. But the Bible contains the same thought so that the sermon need not lack the preaching on that account.

Interested in the Presbytery news. Of course you drew a fair allotment of jobs but why live unless you can serve. But then I am not the one to root along that line. I have had the tendency to tackle so many things that I did none of them well. I should acquire as my motto: "Intensive" rather than "extensive"

I, of course, am very much interested in Maria's school plans. I am so far away that it is hard to know how to advise or to advise. Her judgement is good in so many things that I hoped it would be in this. Of course I shall always be secretly disappointed that she did

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not continue at Carroll. I know Carroll and all her faults and yet I realize the possibilities that lie in her opportunities. That she could not get the work there that she desired was a sufficient reason for her not continuing. In my case the school was of value not so much because of what I studied, but because of what I learned. With her the studies are of some value - with me it made no difference as to whether it was History or Chemistry as long as I was learning. Her case is different^{and} I was sort of banking on her to work out her own salvation while I would furnish the price. With her limited finances she will never get into the society whirl or even crack the University ice. She will have as intimate a touch with things as one does in a correspondence school. Her surroundings, where she lives will have as large an influence on her life as anything. I should not be keen to have her live too close to some of our Chicago relatives. It is a problem to know how much

to try to direct and how much to let them work out themselves.

This has been a good week for letters. On Friday I heard from Franc, Mother, Maudie and you. I should have called it a good week at that but letters from Franc, a girl chum of Francs, a Seminary chum of mine, and an Oak Park girl made it a très bon semaine pour moi. Francs first letter was written in Syracuse when Muz was there. Her second was written in Savannah, Ga. after they had been to Jacksonville and St. Augustine. That was a great trip for Laura.

The Seminary chum writes of his appointment as a chaplain. He is just finishing his Middle year. He is the fellow I have always thought would knock Maudie off of her pins. I sure would enjoy him for a brother-in-law but I have never attempted the match making game and would not start now. He is the last of my most intimate chums to get in the Army. The other three members ~~are~~ of the Jazz Quartette of last year are all chaplains now. Some times I wish I had waited until February, but by