

THE SECOND LINE OF DEFENSE

From the Mississippi valley to the flaming front in Flanders is not as far today as the distance from Paris to Berlin. The Atlantic ocean is not as wide as the River Somme. The girl in the munition factory in the middle West is very close to her brother in the front-line trenches. If her work falters, if one untrue torpedo passes the careful scrutiny of the inspector, the lives of American soldiers pay the price.

It is as necessary to keep the girl who makes the shells physically fit and high of courage as the man who fires the gun. The glory and excitement of war are for the man in khaki. Gridding, marmoset labor far away from the flying flags and martial music is the portion of the girl who makes munitions.

One and a half million women and girls have marched into the service of the United States government, to take the places of the men who have been called to the colors. With every draft and with the opening of every munition cantonment the number is multiplied. These girls work long hours and the work is hard and monotonous. Furthermore, they work at high nervous tension. On the skill of their fingers and the accuracy of their eyes depends the lives of many soldiers, the winning or losing of many battles.

"I can't sleep at night because I'm so afraid I may have passed on something that was not quite true," said one young girl not yet in her twenties, who inspected hundreds of torpedoes every day.

Unless something can make this girl forget at night, and find some rest, her and will lose its cunning.

"Nights and Sundays," said another, "I walk and walk, and I never go the same route twice until I have worn out all the others, and yet I can't forget that perhaps some time, somehow, during the day something may have one through that was not quite right."

"I was just on the edge of going back home," said another. "I couldn't and then the recreation leader asked me if I played basket ball, and told her I was too old. For twenty-eight. She insisted that I just try proving the ball, and now I'm captain of the basket ball team. I play tennis, and can 'set up' and 'wig-wag,' and we're going to make me forewoman of the room. That would have frightened me to death once. But everything is different now, that we have a War Service club."

The war department had seen the need of occupations for out-of-work girls if the employees were to work their greatest efficiency, and through an ordinance department asked the Young Women's Christian Association for recreation leaders, to line up the girls and direct their free-time pleasures.

The government reminded the Y. W. C. A. that as an organization it always had had an interest in the right feeding of girls, in the right feeding of girls, and in the right education of girls, and that the intelligent care of these girls in the munitions factories as one of the essentials in the winning of the war. The government would house and feed them. It could take up recreation buildings, but when it was done it was as helpless as the mother of a motherless child. The government is a composite man. He didn't know what a girl should do when the clock factory whistle blew. He knew she needed looking after. He called to the one woman's organization that for half a century had been a study of the needs of girls, guely, he had an idea that she should be encouraged to play, that she needed wholesome recreation, and as one, wise and sympathetic as a mother, to guide her social needs.

The Blue Triangle's aim is to play lady leisure and to work. Workers are led for in recreation buildings of the 22 federal industrial reservations or munition cantonments which have been opened this summer in several of the states. These reservations are up out of the very fields in a week. They are employing thousands of workers. Many of these men have come from far distant lands. The government provided barracks and mess barracks. In places it is putting up recreation buildings. Where such a building is provided by the government, the Y. W. C. A. will furnish it, using one already standing when available, and doing when that is necessary. All such buildings, whether government association-owned, will operate under the sign of the Blue Triangle. They have big living rooms, assembly rooms for entertainments, club rooms, gymnasiums. The Blue Triangle furnishes a program of service work, national classes, games and entertainments. Military and signal corps will be in charge of soldiers.

Washington, the members of the Young Women's council, a Blue Triangle league of the Y. W. C. A., made a week under an army officer. Between five and six o'clock on a days long lines of motorists are red to watch the drill.

Whenever possible the recreation program includes a field somewhere outdoors. Sports are a part of the plan and leadership in these involves a pledge given to the best of the girls' ability in the ranks of the Women's Industrial Army—the "second line of defense"—and a promise of loyalty by getting in every possible way the best of service.

THE WESTERN FRONT AT HOME

Earn and give. For a year the young people of America have been coached in thrift. Instead of the old problem in the arithmetic book, "If Mary's mother gave her three apples, Jane gave her two, and she ate one, how many would she have?" the third grade girl is now sent to the blackboard to solve, "How many Thrift stamps at 25 cents apiece will Mary own at the end of 12 months if she saves 10 cents a week?"

The girl in the grade above her is learning in her arithmetic lesson how many Thrift stamps it takes to buy the yarn for 500 helmets for the soldiers in France. Still further on the eighth grader is told to figure in terms of War Savings stamps how much it costs to supply a regiment of Uncle Sam's men with shelter tents.

And now the Earn and Give club of the younger girls of the Young Women's Christian association is organized to turn those Thrift lessons into giving. The children of America have been turning in pennies and nickels and pasting a green stamp on their Thrift card. The Earn and Give club can now use some of these cards and War Savings stamps in their campaign among the younger people for the united war fund.

This fall when the war council of the Y. W. C. A. made plans for the 1918 war drive, it included in its program the idea that no young girls under eighteen can do any soliciting, on the streets or otherwise. They can give, but they can only give by earning. Consequently in order to coordinate the efforts of the girls in all the districts over the country, the Earn and Give club is enrolling members and has given out an estimate of 85 apiece to be earned for the war fund campaign by the American girls who still count their age in 'teens.

Five dollars apiece from the younger girls of the country will mean that the nation as a whole will fill its charitable organizations' war chest. Some high school girls in New York city are going to earn her \$5 by shining her own shoes instead of stopping at the Greek stand on her way to school and by making her own sandwiches for her noon lunch. Out in Iowa the girl who has been spending 15 cents plus war tax for a movie three nights a week is going to draw a line through the movie habit except when there is an especially good bill. More than one girl plans to clean all her own gloves this winter and to salvage all the paper and collections of junk about the house which should be sold to the junk man to be worked over into some productive industry. The girls in their 'teens are going to earn instead of ask others for the money. They are to sacrifice and give in their own names and older women will make the public requests for money elsewhere.

Many of the girls who are waiting to join the Earn and Give club are already patriotic beginners, and they have learned several practical lessons in the thrift that will make them effective members of the new club by their conservation of fruits and vegetables. They have canned and pickled. Now when the end of summer brings the beginning of school they will change their thrift into winter thrift and begin saving their \$5 for the Y. W. C. A. war fund.

"Wherever You Are Is the Western Front" is the slogan which the Earn and Give club has adopted. Anna, one very thirteen-year-old daughter of New York's East side, who was one of the first and youngest members to join the campaign at a New York settlement house, had to have it explained to her that instead of western front meaning fight and light meaning fists, the western front means work and work means save in order to give.

The girl who joins the Earn and Give club will discover that in conjunction with her working and saving in order that her club will furnish its quota of the money that is going to help the girls like herself in France and Belgium, she will also find numerous ways in the community to help the way that she had never dreamed of. She will find that all the fruit pits and stoves can be saved from her own dining table and from those of her neighbors, are dropped into the little red barrel at the corner. In order that the carbon which the seeds contain can be used in making charcoal for the American soldiers' gas masks. She will save all the tin foil that she sees for the Red Cross. She will help collect clothing for the French and Belgian orphans and perhaps send them some of her own.

School girls in India, children from squallid, dingy homes, with absolutely no spending money, gave last year to Belgium and Armenian relief when they themselves were not getting enough to eat. They gave up their meat once a week for the Belgians, though they only had it twice a week themselves, and for the Armenians they set aside the handful of fresh grain that otherwise each girl would have ground in her own little stone mill. Both contributions, from all the girls in one missionary's school, amounted only to \$5 a month. "But it was a tremendous sacrifice," their teacher writes, "although a joyous one. It actually meant less bread each day, and once a week a meal of dry bread and water. This was done by 80 girls from the meagrest homes in the world—children between the ages of five and fifteen."

Four hundred thousand girls in 47 states have become Patriotic Learners since America declared war. If as many school girls and working girls from all classes pledge to earn and give, the united war fund campaigners will have \$2,000,000 of their \$17,000,000.

THE BLUE TRIANGLE AT RUSSIA'S FRONT

The Blue Triangle clubrooms in Petrograd were in half shadow. A few scattered candles flung gleams as persistent and as vague as Russia's hope of liberty. A hundred Russian girls and six young men were guests of the first Young Women's Christian association in all Russia. It was a gala afternoon tea but it was dark because the winter days end at three o'clock and there is a restriction on the use of candles and kerosene as well as of electricity.

The girls were making merry even in the gloom of winter, the twilight and the tragedy of war. One slender white-faced girl with purple-shadowed eyes was merrier than all the rest. Her wit and ringing laugh were contagious.

"Sonya is wonderful tonight," one girl whispered to another as she stirred gently into her tea the one lump of sugar doled out carefully for the party. The Y. W. C. A. secretaries had been saving the sugar for months—putting aside at each meal one of the two lumps served with the coffee in the restaurant, that there might be a bit of sweet for this first party. There was no bread.

"Sonya is not drinking her tea," her pale little admirer went on, "yet she nibbled this morning at the factory and the forewoman said she was hungry."

"We're all hungry," was the monotonous reply. "It wasn't that."

Something stopped the laughter and talk suddenly but the hush that fell in the dimly lit room was as joyous as the gaiety. One of Russia's greatest singers stood by the piano and lifted up her glorious voice filled with the tears and heartbreak that people at peace call thrills.

They went away early when the music was done—these sad-eyed, half-starved little guests of the Blue Triangle—for danger lurks in the dark of Petrograd streets, robberies and murders—sharp little by-products of a nation's chaos and a world at war.

Sonya lingered after the others were gone. She was standing close by the secretary's chair when she turned from saying goodnight to the last one of the other girls. The laughter had died out of the girls' eyes and the gaiety from her voice.

"Will you give me a note to the factory superintendent," she asked, "telling him I'm attending classes here at night?" She spoke in French, for she knew no English, and the secretary, no Russian.

"Yes, if it will help you." The secretary was glad to give her such a note but she was curious. "Tell me why."

"If he knows the girls are going to night classes he won't put us on the night shift. He will let us work days so we can come. Yesterday I asked for the night shift. Today I have changed my mind."

The secretary wondered. Sonya had not been in any of the classes. Had the bright little party given her an interest in the work of the association? Had the friendliness of the American secretaries reached her? Was it the music that had given her an impetus to study toward something beyond a factory?

"What is it that interests you?" the secretary asked her. "You are not in any of the classes now, are you? What is it you want to take up?"

"This morning I looked out the factory window," and Sonya's voice reminded the secretary of the call of a night bird before a storm. "Down in the courtyard was a crowd and three men were killed. Killed by the police—the bolshevik police, while I stood there and watched. They said they were anarchists. One was my brother. Another was my sweetheart. I came here tonight to forget. But I cannot forget. Always I will remember. I want nothing now but to carry on their work, and to do that I must study and learn—I must learn English and many other things. I want to go in all the classes. If the foreman at the factory knows I do that, he will help. He will let me work days."

In the dark, the hunger, the cold, and the terror of Petrograd, the Blue Triangle is sending out its shining invitation to the bewildered woman and young girls of Russia. It is offering a little oasis in the midst of the chaos where they may come and rest and relax, play games, listen to music, study English, French, stenography, bookkeeping, or music, and as one tired girl expressed it, forget for the moment that they are in Petrograd. Most of the girls who gather at the sign of the Blue Triangle are bookkeepers and stenographers, but scattered among them are factory girls, domestics, and girls who never have worked.

In Petrograd and elsewhere in Russia," says Miss Charles Spencer, world secretary of the Y. W. C. A., who started the work in Russia, "girls formerly employed in government offices come to us who have struck against the bolsheviks. They're out of jobs. They're hungry. One girl told me she couldn't take gymnasium work. It gave her such an appetite. But they refuse to return to work for the bolsheviks."

Miss Helen Ogden, one of the Y. W. C. A. secretaries who was forced to leave Petrograd on account of the German advance, writes home that: "It's like living on the screen of a melodrama to be in Russia. Bullets and shooting are almost as familiar street sounds here as the clang of the street car and the humk of the automobile at home. There are gunshots and the girl who is shot from a shooting and street battles end to the only when we are told by the authorities that we must."

A BIT OF HOME WITHIN THE CAMP

A long, low building of frame construction, attractively planned, with wide verandas and a homelike aspect. Outside are hanging the flags—the Stars and Stripes, which must soon be taken in as it is nearly sunset, and another flag bearing a little triangle of blue and the letters Y. W. C. A. It is a fall afternoon and the air is a bit sharp. Through the front windows of the house the woman approaching up the walk can see the cheerful glow of an open fireplace. There is the sound of a piano and some one is singing.

The woman, who is slight and young and fresh-looking, puts her heavy suitcase down on the walk and shifts the baby she is carrying to the other arm. She listens a minute, then picks up the luggage and walks bravely up to the front door. Some one has heard her coming and is there to meet her. Some one always is in places like this. The door is thrown open and a kind woman's voice says: "Oh, do come in and rest. Let me take the baby." The baby is passed over and the stranger, worn from a long journey, tired and sad, is given the welcome which only the Y. W. C. A. hostesses know how to give.

She explains that she has come to see John before he leaves for the front. She has been saving her money for traveling expenses, and has come to surprise him. John has never seen the baby, and now maybe he never will, for she has discovered that John has just left on a two days' furlough to surprise her. Before she could get a train back to her home John's furlough will have expired and he will be on his way back to camp. The little mother does not know how to meet the situation and tears of fatigue and disappointment begin to flow.

"Well, that's too bad," says the sympathetic Y. W. C. A. worker. "But cheer up. You can just stay here for a couple of days. We'll send a wire to John at the first place his train stops and tell him to take the next train back. He can enjoy his furlough here."

This is home and the little family has a glorious day of it. The Young Women's Christian association has established 92 hostess houses of this character for American soldiers and sailors and their families. In this best built-in of news lies one of the most potent factors in the winning of this war. Our boys are fighting for their homes. The Y. W. C. A. with its hostess work in this country and in France is helping to keep the ideal of American home life constantly before the men who are protecting it. These men had to go away from their individual homes, but there is a home which follows them—a place where they can go when they are off duty and meet their families and rest. There is a room in every Y. W. C. A. hostess house with a real fireplace in it and a domestic hearth. There are chairs with cushions on them; the china is not of the iron-bound bucket variety necessary in camps; and best of all, the boys say, there are nice women to talk to. No boy in camp would hesitate to ask his mother or sister or the girl he thinks most of to meet him at a Y. W. C. A. house, for he knows that the woman she will see there are of the right kind. The very fact that it is known that there is a real, homey place near each camp authorized by the war department and protected over by dignified and refined women, has served very largely to discourage the other type of woman and keep her away from the men she formerly preyed upon.

The Y. W. C. A. houses are not established with any view to marking class lines, however, although many of the hostesses who assist led lives of greatest ease and luxury before the war. Democracy rules at the sign of the Blue Triangle.

A story is told of a great merchant's wife whose individual fortune amounts to the million mark. This lady is a member of one of the Y. W. C. A. committees, and on one occasion she was helping in the cafeteria of a hostess house at the Great Lakes naval training station. A little shopgirl who had a "day off" from her work in the basement of the great store owned by the Y. W. C. A. worker's husband, and who had come to see her sailor brother, was in a state street hurry for service. She sharply ordered the merchant's wife to "look alive with these forks, girlie."

The lady addressed as "girlie" quite humbly saw to it that the pile of forks was replenished. Then she went over and talked to the girl, helped her to locate her brother and sent her away happy. The shopgirl never knew that she had been talking to her employer's wife.

There are two hostess houses at the Great Lakes station, and it is a wonderful sight to see the crowds of women relatives and friends of the sailors who throng to them on the Wednesday drill afternoons. From 1,000 to 3,000 persons a day are cared for in the cafeterias, and the nurseries are full of sailor babies, whose mothers can leave them there safely while they are on the grounds.

In addition to the hostess house work in this country the Y. W. C. A. has established the famous Hot Springs Petrograd in Paris as a center for transient women war workers overseas. There are also many foyers or recreation centers in France where girl munitions workers, signal corps girls and others are refreshed and brightened by association with the play leaders of the Y. W. C. A. who have introduced American gymnasium classes into French life.

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