

THE SEARCH

By Grace Livingston Hill-Lutz

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He was not satisfied with just meeting death bravely, with the ardor of patriotism in his breast, as he heard so many about him talk in these days. That was well so far as it went, but it did not solve the mystery of the future life nor make him sure how he would stand in that other world to which death stood ready to escort him presently. Death might be victor over his body, but he wanted to be sure that death should not also kill that something within him which he felt must live forever. He turned it over for days and came to the conclusion that the only one who could help him was God. God was the beginning of it all. If there was a God He must be available to help a soul in a time like this. There must be a way to find God and get the secret of life, and so he was ready to meet death that death should not conquer anything but the body. How could one find God? Had anybody ever found Him? Did anyone really think they had found Him? These were questions that beat upon his soul day after day as he drilled his men and went through the long hard hours of discipline, or lay upon his straw tick at night while 150 other men about him slept.

His mother's secret attempts at religion had been too feeble and too hidden in her own breast to have made much of an impression upon him. She had only hoped her faith was founded upon a rock. She had not known. And so her buffeted soul had never given evidence to her son of hidden holy refuge where he might flee with her in time of need.

New and then the vision of a girl blurred across his thoughts uncertainly, life a bright moth hovering in the distance whose shadow fell across his dusty path. But it was far away and vague, and only a glance in her eyes belonged to him. She was not of his world.

He looked up to the yellow sky through the yellow dust, and his soul cried out to find the way to God before he had to meet death, but the heavens seemed like molten brass. Not that he was afraid of death with a physical fear, but that his soul recoiled from being conquered by it and he felt convinced that there was a way to meet it with a smile of assurance if only he could find it out. He had read that people had met it that way. Was it all their imagination? The mere illusion of a fanatical brain? Well, he would try to find out God. He would put himself in the places where God ought to be, and when he saw any indication that God was there he would cry out until he made God hear him!

The day he came to that conclusion was Sunday and he went over to the Y. M. C. A. auditorium. They were having a Mary Pickford moving picture show there. If he had happened to go at any time during the morning he might have heard some fine sermons and perhaps have found the right man to help him, but this was evening and the men were being amused.

He stood for a few moments and watched the pretty show. The sunlight on Mary's beautiful hair, as it fell shimmering through the trees in the picture reminded him of the red-gold lights on Ruth Mac Donald's hair the morning he left home, and with a sigh he turned away and walked to the edge of camp where the woods were still standing.

Along he looked up to the starry sky. Amusement was not what he wanted now. He was in search of something vague and great that would satisfy, and give him a reason for being and suffering and dying perhaps. He called it God because he had no other name for it. Red-gold hair might be for others but not for him. He might not take it where he would and he would not take it where it lay easy to get. If he had been in the same class with some other fellows he knew he would have wasted no time on follies. He would have gone for the very highest, finest woman. But there! What was the use! Besides, even if he had been—and he had had—every joy of life here was but a passing show and must sometime come to an end. And at the end would be this old problem. Sometime he would

have to realize it, even if war had not come and brought the revelation prematurely. What was it that he wanted? How could he find out how to die? Where was God?

But the stars were high and cold and gave no answer, and the whispering leaves, although they soothed him, sighed and gave no help.

The feeling was still with him next morning when the mail was distributed. There would be nothing for him. His mother had written her weekly letter and it had reached him the day before. He could expect nothing for several days now. Other men were getting sheaves of letters. How friendless he seemed among them all. One had a great chocolate cake that a girl had sent him and the others were crowding around to get a bit. It was doubtful if the laughing owner got more than a bite himself. He might have been one of the group if he had chosen. They all liked him well enough, although they knew him very little as yet, for he had kept much to himself. But he turned sharply away from them and went out. Somehow he was not in the mood for fun. He felt he must be growing morbid but he could not throw it off that morning. It all seemed so hopeless, the things he had tried to do in life and the slow progress he had made upward; and now to have it all blocked by war!

None of the other fellows ever dreamed that he was lonely, big, husky, handsome fellow that he was, with a continuous joke on his lips for those he had chosen as associates, with an arm of iron and a jaw that set like steel, grim and unmistakably brave. The awkward squad as they wrathfully obeyed his stern orders would have told you he had no heart, the way he worked them, and would not have believed that he was just plain homesick and lonesome for some one to care for him.

He was not hungry that day when the dinner call came, and flung himself down under a scrub oak outside the barracks while the others rushed in with their mess kits ready for beans or whatever was provided for them. He was glad that they were gone, glad that he might have the luxury of being miserable all alone for a few minutes. He felt strangely as if he were going to cry, and yet he didn't know what about. Perhaps he was going to be sick. That would be horrible down in that half finished hospital with hardly any equipment yet! He must brace up and put an end to such softness. It was all in the idea anyway.

Then a great hand came down upon his shoulder with a mighty slap and he flung himself bolt upright with a frown to find his comrade whose bunk was next to his in the barracks. He towered over Cameron polishing his tin plate with a vigor.

"What's the matter with you, you boob. There's roast beef and its good. Cooky saved a piece for you. I told him you'd come. Go in and get it quick! There's a letter for you, too, in the office. I'd have brought it only I was afraid I would miss you. Here, take my mess kit and hurry! There's some cracker-jack pickles, too, little sweet ones! Step lively, or some one will swipe them all!"

Cameron arose, accepted his friend's dishes and sauntered into the mess hall. The letter couldn't be very important. His mother had no time to write again soon, and there was no one else. It was likely an advertisement or a formal greeting from some of the organizations at home. They did that about fortnightly, the Red Cross, the Woman's club, the Emergency Aid, the fire company. It was kind in them but he wasn't keen about it just then. It could wait until he got his dinner. They didn't have roast beef every day, and now that he thought about it he was hungry.

He almost forgot the letter after dinner until a comrade reminded him handing over a thick delicately scented envelope with a silver crest on the back. The boys got off their kidding about "the girl he'd left behind him" and he answered with his old good-natured grin that made them love him, letting them think he had all kinds of girls, for the dinner had somewhat restored his spirits, but he crumpled the let-

ter into his pocket and got away into the woods to read it.

Deliberately he walked down the yellow road, up over the hill by the signal corps tents, across Wig-Wag Park to the woods beyond, and sat down on a log with his letter. He told himself that it was likely one of those fool letters the fellows were getting all the time from silly girls who were uniform-crazy. He wouldn't answer it, of course, and he felt a kind of contempt with himself for being weak enough to read it even to satisfy his curiosity.

Then he tore open the envelope half angrily and a faint whiff of violets floated out to him. Over his head a meadow lark trilled a long sweet measure, and glad surprise suddenly entered into his soul.

CHAPTER V.

The letter was written in a fine beautiful hand and even before he saw the silver monogram at the top, he knew who was the writer, though he did not even remember to have seen the writing before:

My Dear Friend:

I have hesitated a long time before writing because I do not know that I have the right to call you a friend, or even an acquaintance in the commonly accepted sense of that term. It is so long since you and I went to school together, and we have been so widely separated since then that perhaps you do not even remember me, and may consider my letter an intrusion. I hope not, for I should hate to rank with the girls who are writing to strangers under the license of mistaken patriotism.

My reason for writing you is that a good many years ago you did something very nice and kind for me one day, in fact you helped me twice, although I don't suppose you knew it. Then the other day, when you were going to camp and I sat in my car and watched you, it suddenly came over me that you were doing it again; this time a great big wonderful thing for me; and doing it just as quietly and inconspicuously as you did it before; and all at once I realized how splendid it was and wanted to thank you.

It came over me, too, that I had never thanked you for the other times, and very likely you never dreamed that you had done anything at all.

You see I was a little girl, very much frightened, because Chuck Woodcock had teased me about my curls and said that he was going to catch me and cut them off, and send me home to my aunt that way, and she would turn me out of the house. He had been frightening me for several days, so that I was afraid to go to school alone, and yet I would not tell my aunt because I was afraid she would take me away from the public school and send me to a private school which I did not want. But that day I had seen Chuck Woodcock steal in behind the hedge, ahead of the girls. The others were ahead of me and I was all out of breath—running to catch up because I was afraid to pass him alone; and just as I got near two of them—Mary Wurta and Caroline Meadows, you remember them, don't you?—they gave a scream and pitched headlong on the sidewalk. They had tripped over a wire he had stretched from the tree to the hedge. I stopped short and got behind a tree, and I remember how the tears felt in my throat, but I was afraid to let them out because Chuck would call me a cry baby and I hated that. And just then you came along behind me and jumped through the hedge and caught Chuck and gave him an awful whipping. "Licking" I believe we called it then. I remember how condemned I felt as I ran by the hedge and knew in my heart that I was glad you were hurting him because he had been so cruel to me. He used to pull my curls whenever he sat behind me in recitation.

I remember you came in to school late with your hair all mussed up beautifully, and a big tear in your coat, and a streak of mud on your face. I was so worried lest the teacher would find out you had been fighting and make you stay after school. Because you see I knew in my heart that you had been winning a battle for me, and if anybody had to stay after school I wished it could be me because of what you had done for me. But you came in laughing as you always did, and looking as if nothing in the world unusual had happened, and when you passed my desk you threw before me the loveliest pink rose bud I ever saw. That was the second thing you did for me.

Perhaps you won't understand how nice that was, either, for you see you didn't know how unhappy I had been. The girls hadn't been very friendly with me. They told me I was "stuck up," and they said I was too young to be in their classes anyway and ought to go to kindergarten. It was all very hard for me because I longed to be big and have them for my friends. I was very lonely in that great big house with only my aunt and grandfather for company. But the girls wouldn't be friends at all until they saw you give me that rose, and that turned the tide. They were crazy about you, every one of them, and they made up to me after that and told me their secrets and shared their lunch and we had great times. And it was all because you gave me the rose that day. The rose itself was lovely and I was tremendously happy over it for its own sake, but it meant a whole lot to me besides, and opened the little world of school to my longing feet. I always wanted to thank you for it, but you looked as if you didn't want me, so I never dared; and lately I wasn't quite sure you knew me, because you never looked my way any more.

But when I saw you standing on the platform the other day with the other drafted men, it all came over me how you were giving up the life you had planned to go out and fight for me and other girls like me. I hadn't thought of the war that way before, although, of course, I had heard that thought expressed in speeches; but it never struck into my heart until I saw the look on your face. It was a kind of "knightliness," if there is such a word, and when I thought about it I realized it was the very same look you had worn when you burst through the hedge after Chuck Woodcock, and again when you came back and threw that rose on my desk. Although, you had a big, broad boy's grin on your face then, and were chewing gum I remember quite distinctly; and the other day you looked so serious and sorry as if it meant a great deal to you to go, but you were giving up everything gladly without even thinking of hesitating. The look on your face was a man's look, not a boy's.

It has meant so much to me to realize this last great thing that you are doing for me and for the other girls of our country that I had to write and tell you how much I appreciate it.

I have been wondering whether some one has been knitting you a sweater yet, and the other things that they knit for soldiers; and if they haven't, whether you would let me send them to you? It is the only thing I can do for you who have done so much for me.

I hope you will not think I am presuming to have written this on the strength of a childish acquaintance. I wish you all honors that can come to you on such a quest as yours, and I had almost said all good luck, only that that word sounds too frivolous and pagan for such a serious matter; so I will say all safety for a swift accomplishment of your task and a swift homecoming. I used to think when I was a little child that nothing could ever hurt you or make you afraid, and I cannot help feeling now that you will come through the fire unscathed. May I hope to hear from you about the sweater and things? And may I sign myself, Your friend?

Ruth MacDonald.

John Cameron lifted his eyes from the paper at last and looked up at the sky. Had it ever been so blue before? At the trees. What whispering wonders of living green! Was that only a bird that was singing that heavenly song—a meadow lark, not an angel? Why had he never appreciated meadow larks before?

He rested his head back against a big oak and his soldier's hat fell off on the ground. He closed his eyes and the burden of loneliness that had borne down upon him all these weeks in the camp lifted from his heart. Then he tried to realize what had come to him. Ruth MacDonald, the wonder and admiration of his childhood days, the admired and envied of the home town, the petted beauty at whose feet every man fell, the girl who had everything that wealth could purchase! She had remembered the little old rose he had dared to throw on her desk, and had bridged the years with this letter!

(To Be Continued Next Week)

Members of the famous prison band at Atlanta, Ga., gave a concert recently broadcast from apparatus at the Atlanta Journal. It was the first time many of these prisoners had been outside prison walls since their arrival.

Had Your Iron Today?



Never Mind— Re-vitalize

YOU BET it's warm—the more you need then for keeping the vitality up to par.

Vital men resist heat easily. Languid ones are flooded. Re-vitalize yourself and you won't mind the weather.

Get new energy in little raisins.

1560 calories of energizing nutriment per pound in Little Sun-Maids. 75 per cent pure fruit sugar.

Wonderful because this sugar doesn't need, and, therefore, doesn't tax digestion and thus heat the blood. Yet energizes almost immediately.

Contain fatigue-resisting food-iron also. Try a box today.

Little Sun-Maids

Between-Meal Raisins
5c Everywhere

—in Little Red Packages

"Willing to Pay."
Two colored ball teams were assembled and were about to start their game, but discovered one of their fielders missing. Their captain asked for someone from the crowd to fill the fielder's place. A tall gent said he had some experience, so they put him in the game. Everything went all right till it came his turn at bat. After the new comer had swung at two pitched balls he connected with the next one and it went soaring over the fence. The crowd all began to yell "Run! Run!" But he didn't get it, and turning to the crowd he shouted: "Run nothing. I'll buy them another ball!"

Proof.
"Hubby, do you love me?"
"Of course."
"How much do you love me?"
"Well, here's my check book. You can glance over the stubs."—Judge.

Silence is the hedge that guards wisdom.

Unkind Remark.
A scenario writer experienced great difficulty in getting his plots accepted. As a rule, they were so uninteresting that a complete hearing was seldom granted. At last he managed to persuade a weary producer to listen to the synopsis of his latest play.
"Imagine," he began, "midnight, all silent as the grave."
"Two burglars force open library windows, and eventually commence operations on the safe. The clock strikes one."
"Which one?" yawned the producer.

A Preference.
We rather hope it will turn-out that the dead can't really speak to us after all, as we have a number of deceased friends who we'd rather believe are pleasantly situated as long as we can, —Ohio State Journal.

But on an Average?
"I hear your wife is a 200-pounder."
"Yes, and some days she pounds me more than that."



EACH IS A GENUINE GOODYEAR

Each of the two tires illustrated above is a genuine Goodyear through and through.

One is the famous reliable 30 x 3 1/2 inch Goodyear All-Weather Tread Clincher.

Its companion is the popular 30 x 3 1/2 inch Goodyear Cross Rib.

The Goodyear Cross Rib is built of the same high grade Egyptian cotton fabric that goes into the All-Weather Tread Goodyear.

It has a long-wearing but differently designed tread, and sells for less money.

More than 5,000,000 of these tires have been sold in the last five years.

Their fine performance has demonstrated the folly of buying unknown and unguaranteed tires of lower price.

Ask your Goodyear Service Station Dealer about their advantages.

GOOD YEAR