

# THE SEARCH

By Grace Livingston Hill-Lutz  
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He wrote that letter over and over mentally as he tossed on his bunk in the dark, changing phrases and whole sentences. Perhaps it would be better to say something about "her officer friends" and make it very clear to her that he understood his own distant position with her. Then suddenly he kicked the big blue blanket off and sat up with a deep sigh. What a fool he was. He could not write another letter. The letter was gone, and as it was written he must abide by it. He could not get it back or unwrite it much as he wished it. There was no excuse, or way to make it possible to write and refuse those sweaters and things, was there?

He sat staring into the darkness while the man in the next bunk roused to toss back his blanket which had fallen superfluously across his face, and to mutter some sleepy imprecations. But Cameron was off on the composition of another letter:  
My Dear Miss Macdonald:

I have been thinking it over and have decided that I do not need a sweater or any of those other things you mention. I really am pretty well supplied with necessities, and you know they don't give us much room to put anything around the barracks. There must be a lot of other fellows who need them more, so I will decline that you may give your work to others who have nothing, or to those who are your personal friends.

Very truly,  
J. Cameron.

Having convinced his turbulent brain that it was quite possible for him to write such a letter as this, he flung himself miserably back on his hard cot again and realized that he did not want to write it. That it would be almost an insult to the girl, who even if she had been patronizing him, had done it with a kind intent, and after all it was not her fault that he was a fool. She had a right to marry whom she would. Certainly he never expected her to marry him. Only he had to own to himself that he wanted those things she had offered. He wanted to touch something she had worked upon, and feel that it belonged to him. He wanted to keep this much of human friendship for himself. Even if she was going to marry another man, she had always been his ideal of a beautiful, lovable woman, and as such she should stay his, even if she married a dozen enemy officers!

It was then he began to see that the thing that was really making him miserable was that she was giving her sweet young life to such a rotten little mean-spirited man as Wainwright. That was the real pain. If some fine noble man like—well—like Captain La Rue, only younger, of course, should come along he would be glad for her. But this excuse for a man! Oh, it was outrageous! How could she be deceived? and yet, of course, women knew very little of men. They had no standards by which to judge them. They had no opportunity to see them except in plain sight of those they wished to please. One could not expect them to have discernment in selecting their friends. But what a pity! Things were all wrong! There ought to be some way to educate a woman so that she would realize the dangers all about her and be somewhat protected. It was worse for Ruth Macdonald because she had no men in her family who could protect her. Her old grandfather was the only near living male relative and he was a hopeless invalid, almost entirely confined to the house. What could he know of the young men who came to court his granddaughter? What did he remember of the ways of men, having been so many years shut away from their haunts?

The corporal tossed on his hard cot and sighed like a furnace. There ought to be some one to protect her. Someone ought to make her understand what kind of a fellow Wainwright was! She had called him her knight, and a knight's business was to protect, yet what could he do? He could not go to her and tell her that the man she was going to marry was rotten and utterly without moral principle. He could not even send some one else to warn her. Who could he send? His mother? No, his mother would feel shy and afraid of

girl like that. She had always lived a quiet life. He doubted if she would understand herself how utterly unfit a mate Wainwright was for a good pure girl. And there was no one else in the world that he could send. Besides, if she loved the man, and incomprehensible as it seemed, she must love him or why should she marry him?—if she loved him she would not believe an angel from heaven against him. Women were that way; that is, if they were good women, like Ruth. Oh, to think of her tied up to that—beast! He could think of no other word. In his agony he rolled on his face and groaned aloud.

"Oh God!" his soul cried out, "why do such things have to be? If there really is a God why does He let such awful things happen to a pure, good girl? The same old bitter question that had troubled the hard young days of his own life. Could there be a God who cared when bitterness was in so many cups? Why had God let the war come?"

Sometime in the night the tumult in his brain and heart subsided and he fell into a profound sleep. The next thing he knew the kindly roughness of his comrades awakened him with shakes and wet sponges flying through the air, and he opened his consciousness to the world again and heard the bugle blowing for roll call. Another day had dawned grayly and he must get up. They set him on his feet, and bantered him into action, and he responded with his usual wit that put them all in howls of laughter, but as he stumbled into place in the line in the 5 o'clock dawning he realized that a heavy weight was on his heart which he tried to throw off. What did it matter what Ruth Macdonald did with her life? She was nothing to him, never had been and never could be. If only he had not written that letter all would now be as it always had been. If only she had not written her letter! Or no! He put his hand to his breast pocket with a quick movement of protection. Somehow he was not yet ready to relinquish that one taste of bright girl friendliness, even though it had brought a stab in its wake.

He was glad when the orders came for him and five other fellows to tramp across the camp to the gas school and go through two solid hours of instruction ending with a practical illustration of the gas mask and a good dose of gas. It helped to put his mind on the great business of war which was to be his only business now until it or he were ended. He set his lips grimly and went about his work vigorously. What did it matter, anyway, what she thought of him? He need never answer another letter, even if she wrote. He need not accept the package from the postoffice. He could let them send it back—refuse it and let them send it back, that was what he could do! Then she might think what she liked. Perhaps she would suppose him already gone to France. Anyhow, he would forget her! It was the only sensible thing to do.

Meanwhile the letter had flown on its way with more than ordinary swiftness, as if it had known that a force was seeking to bring it back again. The Y. M. C. A. man was carried at high speed in an automobile to the nearest station to the camp, and arrived in time to catch the Baltimore train just stopping. In the Baltimore station he went to mail the letter just as the letter gatherer arrived with his keys to open the box. So the letter lost no time but was sorted and started northward before midnight, and by some happy chance arrived at its destination in time to be laid by Ruth Macdonald's plate at lunch time the next day.

Some quick sense must have warned Ruth, for she gathered her mail up and slipped it unobtrusively into the pocket of her skirt before it could be noticed. Dottie Wetherill had come home with her for lunch and the bright red Y. M. C. A. triangle on the envelope was so conspicuous. Dottie was crazy over soldiers and all things military. She would be sure to exclaim and ask questions. She was one of those people who always found out everything about you that you did not keep under absolute lock and key.

Every day since she had written her letter to Cameron Ruth

had watched for an answer, her cheeks glowing sometimes with the least bit of mortification that she should have written at all to have received this rebuff. Had he, after all, misunderstood her? Or had the letter gone astray, or the man gone to the front? She had almost given up expecting an answer now after so many weeks, and the nice warm olive-drab sweater and neatly knitted socks with extra long legs and bright lines of color at the top, with the wristlets and muffler lay wrapped in tissue paper at the very bottom of a drawer in the chiffonier where she would seldom see it and where no one else would ever find it and question her. Probably by and by when the colored draftees were sent away she would get them out and carry them down to the headquarters to be given to some needy man. She felt humiliated and was beginning to tell herself that it was all her own fault and a good lesson for her. She had even decided not to go and see John Cameron's mother again lest that, too, might be misunderstood. It seemed that the frank true instincts of her own heart had been wrong, and she was getting what she justly deserved for departing from Aunt Rhoda's strictly conventional code.

Nevertheless, the letter in her pocket which she had not been able to look at carefully enough to be sure if she knew the writing, crackled and rustled and set her heart beating excitedly, and her mind to wondering what it might be. She answered Dottie Wetherill's chatter with distraught monosyllables and absent smiles, hoping that Dottie would feel it necessary to go home soon after lunch.

But it presently became plain that Dottie had no intention of going home soon; that she had come for a purpose and that she was plying all her arts to accomplish it. Ruth presently roused from her reverie to realize this and set herself to give Dottie as little satisfaction as possible out of her task. It was evident that she had been sent to discover the exact standing and relation in which Ruth held Lieutenant Harry Wainwright. Ruth strongly suspected that Dottie's brother Bob had been the instigator of the mission, and she had no intention of giving him the information.

So Ruth's smiles came out and the insupportable twinkle grew in her lovely eyes. Dottie chattered on sentence after sentence, paragraph after paragraph, theme after theme, always rounding up at the end with some perfectly obvious leading question. Ruth answered in all apparent innocence and sincerity, yet with an utterly different turn of the conversation from what had been expected, and with an indifference that was hopelessly baffling unless the young ambassador asked a point blank question, which she hardly dared to do of Ruth Macdonald without more encouragement. And so at last a long two hours dragged thus away, and finally Dottie Wetherill at the end of her small string, and at a loss for more themes on which to trot around again to the main idea, reluctantly accepted her defeat and took herself away, leaving Ruth to her long delayed letter.

Ruth sat looking into space with starry eyes and glowing cheeks after she had read the letter. It seemed to her a wonderful letter, quite the most wonderful she had ever received. Perhaps it was because it fitted so perfectly with her ideal of the writer, who from her little girlhood had always been a picture of what a hero must be. She used to dream big things about him when she was a child. He had been the best baseball player in school when he was 10, and the handsomest little rowdy in town, as well as the boldest, bravest champion of the little girls.

As she grew older and met him occasionally she had always been glad that he kept his old hero look though often appearing in rough garb. She had known they were poor. There had been some story about a loss of money and a long expensive sickness of the father's following an accident which made all the circumstances most trying, but she had never heard the details. She only knew that most of the girls in her set looked on him as a nobody and would no more have companied with him than with their father's chauffeur. After he grew older and began to go to college some of the girls began to think he was good looking, and to say it was quite commendable in him to try to get an education. Some even unearthed the fact that his had been a fine old family in former days and that there had been wealth and servants once. But the story died down as John

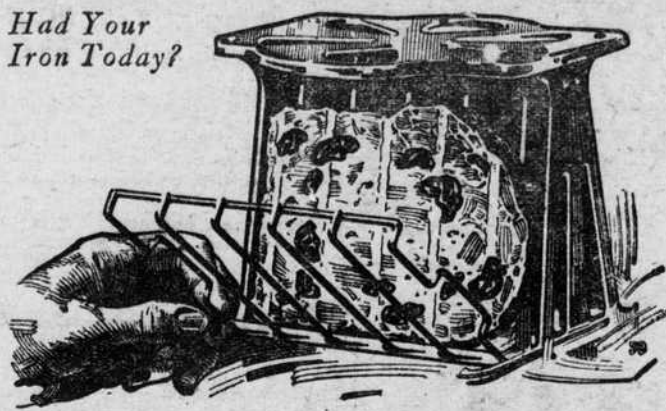
Cameron walked his quiet way apart, keeping to his old friends, and not responding to the feeble advance of the girls. Ruth had been away at school in these days and had seldom seen him. When she had there had always been that lingering admiration for him from the old days. She had told herself that of course he could not be worth much or people would know him. He was probably ignorant and uncultured, and a closer acquaintance would show him far from what her young ideas had pictured her hero. But somehow that day at the station, the look in his face had revealed fine feeling, and she was glad now to have her intuition concerning him verified by his letter.

And what a letter it was! Why, no young man of her acquaintance could have written with such poetic delicacy. That paragraph about the rose was beautiful, and not a bit too presuming, either, in one who had been a perfect stranger all these years. She liked his simple frankness and the easy way he went back 12 years and began just where they left off. There was none of the bold forwardness that might have been expected in one who had not moved in cultured society. There was no unpleasant assumption of familiarity which might have emphasized her fear that she had overstepped the bounds of convention in writing to him in the first place. On the contrary, her humiliation at his long delayed answer was all forgotten now. He had understood her perfectly and accepted her letter in exactly the way she had meant it without the least bit of foolishness or unpleasantness. In short, he had written the sort of a letter that the kind of man she had always thought—hoped—he was would be likely to write, and it gave her a surprisingly pleasant feeling of satisfaction. It was as if she had discovered a friend all of her own not made for her by her family, nor one to whom she felt heir because of her wealth and position; but just one she had found, out in the great world of souls.

If he had been going to remain at home there might have been a number of questions, social and conventional, which would have arisen to bar the way to this free feeling of a friendship, and which she would have had to meet and reason with before her mind would have shaken itself unhampered; but because he was going away and on such an errand, perhaps never to return, the matter of what her friends might think or what the world would say, simply did not enter into the question at all. The war had lifted them both above such ephemeral barriers into the place of vision where a soul was a soul no matter what he possessed or who he was. So, as she sat in her big white room with all its dainty accessories to a luxurious life, fit setting for a girl so lovely, she smiled unhindered at this bit of beautiful friendship that had suddenly drifted down at her feet out of a great outside unknown world. She touched the letter thoughtfully with caressing fingers, and the kind of a high look in her eyes that a lady of old must have worn when she thought of her knight. It came to her to wonder that she had not felt so about any other of her men friends who had gone into the service. Why should this special one soldier boy represent the whole war, as it were, in this way to her. However, it was but a passing thought, and with a smile still upon her lips she went to the drawer and brought out the finely knitted garments she had made, wrapping them up with care and sending them at once upon their way. It somehow gave her pleasure to set aside a small engagement she had for that afternoon until she had posted the package herself.

Even then, when she took her belated way to a little gathering in honor of one of her girl friends who was going to be married the next week to a young aviator, she kept the smile on her lips and the dreamy look in her eyes, and now and then brought herself back from the chatter around her to remember that something pleasant had happened. Not that there was any foolishness in her thoughts. There was too much dignity and simplicity about the girl, young as she was, to allow her to deal even with her own thoughts in any but a maidenly way, and it was not in the ordinary way of a maid with a man that she thought of this young soldier. He was so far removed from her life in every way, and all the well-drilled formalities, that it never occurred to her to think of him in the same way she thought of her other men friends.

Had Your Iron Today?



## Toast It— Delicious Raisin Bread

DO this some morning and surprise the family: Serve hot *raisin toast* at breakfast, made from full-fruited, luscious raisin bread. Let your husband try it with his coffee. Hear what he says.

Your grocer or bake shop can supply the proper bread. No need to bake at home.

Made with big, plump, tender, seeded Sun-Maid Raisins, and if you get the right kind there's a generous supply of these delicious fruit-meats in it.

Insist on this full-fruited bread and you'll have luscious toast.

Rich in energizing nutriment and iron—great food for business men.

Make most attractive bread pudding with left-over slices. There's real economy in bread like this.

Try tomorrow morning. A real surprise. Telephone your dealer to send a loaf today.



## Sun-Maid Seeded Raisins

Make delicious bread, pies, puddings, cakes, etc. Ask your grocer for them. Send for free book of tested recipes.

Sun-Maid Raisin Growers,  
Membership 13,000  
Dept. N-40-12, Fresno, Calif.



## New Shoes—Old Shoes—Tight Shoes

all feel the same if you shake into them some

## ALLEN'S FOOT-EASE

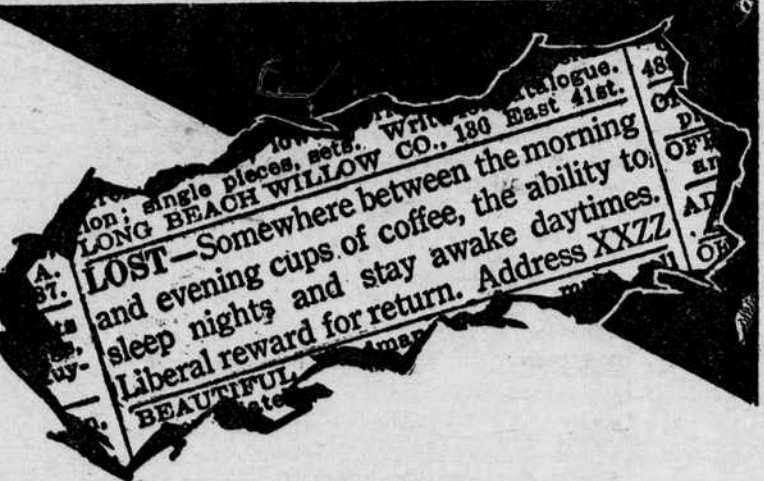
The Antiseptic, Healing Powder for the Feet  
Takes the friction from the shoe, freshens the feet and gives new vigor. At night, when your feet are tired, sore and swollen from walking or dancing, sprinkle ALLEN'S FOOT-EASE in the foot-bath and enjoy the bliss of feet without an ache.

Over 1,500,000 pounds of Powder for the Feet were used by our Army and Navy during the war. In a Pinch, Use ALLEN'S FOOT-EASE



Sensitive Cripples.  
"Cripples are more touchy about their vanity than other people," observed a local manufacturer whose partner has only one leg. "They have more will-power than the rest of us and are often more cheerful. But they are always imagining nonexistent slights."  
The speaker refused to be quoted for an interview unless his partner was also mentioned. "In fact," leave me out of it altogether," he said. "Give me the glory. When I was married, the paper had a long story about the affair. My business was incidentally mentioned. My partner quarreled violently with me for two days because his name did not also appear."—Detroit News.

Lettonia Called "Singing Nation."  
"The Singing Nation" is the name often applied to Lettonia, home of the Letts. The Letts derive the title of "singing nation" from their committal devotion to vocal music.  
For seven centuries the Letts suffered subjection from the German barons, who formed a haughty and firmly entrenched caste of nobility, but despite this oppression the vitality of the Letts was such that they survived. Since the abolition of serfdom in Russia, in 1860, they have advanced in education and economics, and there has been a growth of wealthy and cultured middle-class people.  
A prayer that is long drawn out is apt to be narrow.



## You will find in Postum

a delightful and satisfying mealtime beverage, with no element which can harm nerves and digestion—or cause wakeful nights and dull days.

Your grocer has Postum in two forms: Instant Postum (in tins) made instantly in the cup by the addition of boiling water. Postum Cereal (in packages of larger bulk, for those who prefer to make the drink while the meal is being prepared) made by boiling for fully 20 minutes.

Made by  
Postum Cereal Co., Inc., Battle Creek, Mich.

(To Be Continued Next Week)