



THE YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION
IN RUSSIA Vladivostock.10/10/18.

My Darlings:-

No doubt by this time you have received the wire which said, "Prepare return America. Letter follows," As I said in my letter of Sunday you would be greatly suprised, but I trust that you will be a good soldier and carry out orders. This is an awful wicked City and I would not want you and Ginger to stay here when there was no chance of your seeing me. Your Mother will be made much happier by your return and I hope you will be in better health by the change. God will work all out to the good of us all. It seems awful when I think that months may go by before I see you and Virginia, but we are in this war and must finish the job to the satisfaction of all concerned. The war news is better each day. The Allies are driving ahead, and all reports are to the effect that Bulgaria has made an unconditional Surrender, which also means the finish of Turkey. With those two Nations dealt with and the unsettled conditions in Austria and Germany I hope the thing will soon be finished. I can not see how Germany and Austria can go much longer as they are being defeated each day. In the last replacement troops that came over from America there are about Fifteen hundred boys from Chicago. I have met quite a number. Met a lad yesterday that was in a RealEstate office on the Cor. of 12th. St, and Ashland Blvd. I think men from every walk in life are represented among the U.S. Troops here. All our men are well taken care of. Plenty warm clothing, good Barracks, and plenty to eat. YMCA furnishes them with recreation supplies, Gum, Candy, Tobacco, Cigars, Cigarettes, Soap, Tooth Paste, Tooth Brushes, Shoe polish, Writing materials, Pencils, note books, tea, cakes and pastry, Magazines and Newspapers, and Gramophones. I want you to have my Review of Reviews, Items of Intrest, and Literary Digest fowarded to me here care of the YMCA. The other papers you should write the Publishers in America and ask them to send to you in Oak Park. Please send me the Electric Iron, as I have electricity and can use it on the car.. I must do all my own washing on the car and we can be in real style and iron our clothes once in awhile. When you ship boxes of Curios get a Consul Invoice, (State you have had these things one year) and have them sent to Chicago direct, where they can be examined and if dutiable you can pay it there. Do not take any more stuff than possible as Duty is awful at present. Better to leave at Jeans and have her send it after war is over. Can you not go with the Irish's when they go home? He is a Mason and would take good care of you and Virginia. The Brooklyn left last evening for parts unknown. She has been stationed here since last Winter and I think the Boys were glad to get away as all the City attraction had worn off. I received your letter with inclosures from Bosworth and Frank. Belcher told me before I left that he would send Bosworth a Draft for the Fifty Dollars they still owe him. I will write Bosworth and explain the situation to him. I am glad Frank did not buy the supplies as I will not need them now. Anderson, Meyer, have promised to dispose of the equipment ordered for me by them, from S.S. White. There was a Boat in day before yesterday from Shanghai and I sure did expect some mail from you but as usual was greatly disappointed. Please Honey

Omsk, Russia. Nov. 23rd. 1918.

My Darling:-

It is now the tenth day since we landed in Omsk and I have not received a wire from you yet, I cannot understand what is the trouble. Here it is now ten weeks since I left you (seems like ten years) and only one letter. I am due to leave tonight for Chleabinsk and from there to the Czech front. I do not think that we will stay long at the front as we have been warned that the Czechs are going to withdraw and go home as a general peace is to be signed. The Czechs do not want to take sides in a civil war here in Russia and that is all that is going on at the present as the Germans and Austrian soldiers have been withdrawn. We have been expecting a train in for the last few days and I know I will get some mail on it, but must move on before it arrives suppose I will get it next month sometime. I have been trying to arrange so I could get to stay here over Thanksgiving, as the Red Cross are going to have a big feed, but orders are orders and my train leaves this evening. Miss Baylors party have not started to work yet, they are having a fine time enjoying the sights. There was an American Red Cross train came in this morning with several hundred Czech wounded, there are three Czech Hospitals here, but no American Red Cross as yet. It has been blowing an awful blizzard this evening, this morning was awfully cold about fifteen degrees below. The suffering among the Refugees this winter is going to be something awful. There are thousands all thru Siberia, many hundred children who have been separated from their parents, or parents killed, no money nor a place to live. The Refugees are living in holes dug in the ground, some of the more prosperous have been able to build a little shanty from scrap lumber, others are living in box cars along the Railroad. Typhus fever and other diseases are very prevalent among them, and of course they have no one to care for them and consequently many go WEST. Poor Russia certainly has paid the price for this war, since 1914 there have been lost in killed alone between 5,000,000, and 7,000,000, men. All of the Prisoners are as good as dead, they are returning with T.B. and many other diseases, besides being broken in body and spirit. There has been another change in the Government here, and many people think the next step is the establishing of a Monarchy. Everything seems to be quiet, but you can never tell when it is going to break out anew. Well Honey, I am not going to write you again until I receive a letter or cable from you, I can not stand it much longer. Give my love to all the folks. With oceans of love and kisses to you and Virginia, and a great big hug for each, as ever,

Yours,

Charles.

Mrs. Harriet W. Irons,
1032 So. Scoville Ave.
Oak Park, (Chicago)
Illinois, U.S.A.

Celyabinsk, Dec. 9th. 1918.

My Dearest Darling:-

This has been the happiest day that I have spent since I left you in Foochow, as I received the first mail that I have had since leaving Vladivostock. I received nine letters from you, one from Brand, and two from Shanghai, besides the papers you sent me. The package you spoke of did not materialize, but I am content for the present. Dearest, I have been so on edge from not hearing from you that when I had read your letters I had to have a cry about it, due to the reaction and some of the things you said. I have had to defer writing for some time because I could not control myself sufficiently to face the task. I am glad to know that at last you and Ginger are on your way to the dear old U.S.A. Since sending you the cable from Irkutsk and not having received an answer I did not know what to think. In the last letter I have from you which is Nov. 18th. you did not mention how Virginia was feeling, so I am taking it for granted that she is doing nicely. I am awfully sorry to know that Virginia fell and cut her chin so badly, but as she is such a TOMBOY I suppose that we must expect these happenings. I wrote Frank and Dr. Stone both about Virginia. I explained that it would be necessary for Ginger to have an operation as soon as you arrived in States and I asked Dr. Stone to please give you all the help he could. Go to Dr. Stone and he will be very glad to get you into the Presb. Hospital and I think he will also suggest the best Surgeon on the staff for the Operation. Dr. Herrick is the best man on the Staff but he may be on war work. Tell Dr. Stone that Kenneth D. Miller of the Bohemian Presb. Church of New York is head of the YMCA work for the Czech Army in Russia. Miller knows Dr. Stone, as he is also a Pres. Minister. Miller is a fine scout, but one would not take him for a preacher, as he is so broad minded. He speaks Czech as well as the Czechs themselves, and the Czechs sure do love him, in fact they love all the Americans. The Czechs call us "Strecech" which means Uncle. Honey dear, I must take off my hat to you. As a Financier you have me backed off the map. There is not a thing that you have done which I do not say AMEN to. You did right in selling my Full Dress Suit, and I must say that you received a handsome price as the thing new did not cost me as much as what you sold it for, having had it seven years I think the other fellow got the worst of the bargain. If I am not mistaken I advised you to dispose of your machine before going home, so that was alright. And when you can buy a Corona typewriter for forty dollars, take all that you can get, it is a good investment as they sell for \$120.00 in Shanghai. I am going to sell my blue suit that I brought with me, I can get about one hundred dollars for it here in Siberia. Everything is simply out of sight, material is scarce and hardly any Factories are running. That brings me to one point in one of your letters. Russian Sables are an extinct thing, if you could buy them the price would be prohibitive. For example I wanted to buy a little piece of fur for my Overcoat collar, and the cheapest thing I could find was Thirty-five dollars, so you better bet I did not buy. I will keep my eyes open and I might buy something of the kind privately, as I am trying to do with a Samovar. There are no Samovars on the market now, the Factories having been closed for some time. Honey, you certainly are a doll, and don't worry about my not trusting you. I have fought that all out with GOD and myself. I have placed you and Ginger in Gods keeping and I have explicit faith that what he

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does is for the best. I am now perfectly content and happy, knowing all is well. Tell my little Darling Virginia that God is watching over her Daddy as well as over you two, and that I will come back to you safe and sound, not to worry. I want you and Virginia to be brave and happy, knowing that I am with you in thought at all times, and pray every day that the time will soon come when I can hold you in my arms again, and when that day comes there is going to be a hot time in the old town. As soon as I get my films developed I will send you some pictures of myself and crew. I have an international lineup. My first Asst. is a Chinese, my second a Czech, my interpreter is a Czech, and my orderly is a Hungarian Magyar who has been a prisoner in Russia for three years. My Orderly was an officer in the Austrian Army, is a very nice man, I really feel sorry for him and all like himself. He is a married man and has been away from home for over four years, has not heard from his family for over a year. I do not know what I will do when I have to part from him, as he takes great care of me and my things. It seems awfully nice to have an Austria officer shining your shoes and scrubbing your floors, but believe me he is willing to do that and more to be able to leave the Prison Camp.

You want me to tell you more about my work. I am attached to the Czech Medical Staff and assigned by the Chief of the Medical Staff as Dental Surgeon to the First Field Army, which is operating in the Ufa sector at present, but are now being replaced by Russian troops. I do not know what rank I will receive yet as I am the first foreign Dentist to be attached to their staff. They have some men who pass as Dentists but are more Horse Doctors, as all they do is extract teeth. The amount of artificial work to be done among the Czech troops is appalling. For three or four years they have received no Dental attention, consequently their teeth are in an awful condition. I sure am to be kept busy until they return home, regardless of whether they do any more fighting or not. The Red Cross offered me a First Lieutentancy, but I refused it. The fact of the matter is the Red Cross have bungled every thing they have undertaken here, they are running around talking about what they are going to do but fail to carry any of their plans into actions. Most every one here among the Americans are disgusted with the leaders, who of course are at fault. Many of the Doctors came up from China expecting to be able to do some good, many of them have been on the field for two or three months and have done nothing. While my work is in charge of the Czechs and I can go ahead and carry out some constructive work. I do not care whether I receive a commission or not, I am glad and willing to serve without it. Leave it to the Czechs, they will give me a good Commission one of these days, which will be a surprise to all, my Red Cross friends. Honey dear it is one o'clock and I must get some sleep, so I will finish this in the morning.

Good Morning: I heard some interesting news this morning. General Seřefanik, Minister of War for Bohemia, who arrived in Celyabinsk last Thursday, has brought the word from Pres. Masarysk that the Czechs are to return home. That means that in a month or two that all troops here will be Homeward bound, and I am going with them. Many of the YMCA Boys are going with the troops, and then going Home from Bohemia. This news puts new life into me, as I now have something to look forward to. When I once get started home I will wire you, so when you receive a wire that says "HOMEWARD BOUND" you may know that I am on

Miass, Russia. 12/18/18.

My Darling:-

It seems that there is not enough to write about each day for me to compose a letter, so I am going to write a few lines to you every night; then when I have a letter written I will send along.

If, the Tenyo has made as good time as I figured you should be in San Francisco by this time and in Chicago by the twenty second. I certainly hope that you were able to get across without mishap and that you and Ginger had a good voyage. It is my hope that before long I will be able to meet you from the other side of the world. As things stand now we do not know which way we are going home. I want to go by way of Bohemia, France and England. Of, course it is understood that I am going home with the Czechs.

One week from today is Christmas. I have been promised a big time by Major Dr. Mikulasek, but OH, how I wish I could be with you and Ginger on that day. My orderly was saying tonight that he was going to get a Christmas tree for me.

My interpreter and I were going out tobogganing tonight but could not find a toboggan, which we could borrow. There is a fine place very close to where my caps are located. We took a walk last night after dinner and discovered the place. The nights are still beautiful, cold but of a kind which does not penetrate thru you.

I am finding plenty to do here. Yesterday had twenty seven patients and extracted 36 teeth. Today I had thirty eight patients and extracted 166 teeth. There are about four hundred in the second regiment with extractions alone, besides all the fillings and plate work. I am supposed to spend only fourteen days on my first visit to each of the four regiments, doing at that time all emergency work and extractions. When I return on my next visit I will make plates for all of these for whom I have extracted teeth for. Well, lover it is time a working man was in bed, so I must say Good-Night.

12/19/18.

This has been another busy day for me. I saw thirty three patients and extracted 185 teeth, I guess that is going some. We had some bad news tonight. Yesterday I received a telegram that transportation from Vladivostock was stopped without any explanation as to the cause. Tonight we received word that The Semenovoff Cossacks have declared their independence of the Omsk Government, consequently we are cut off both in front and the rear. Semenovoff operates along the Siberian-Manchurian border, and controls the R.R. for some distance. I do not know whether we can wire thru or not. Today there was a train load of Russian returned prisoners of war from Germania passed thru Miass. They are in an awful condition. Coming thru the territory controlled by the Bolshhevski they were refused food and supplies unless they would consent to fight in the army. They said that thousands were coming home and hundreds were dying along the way on account of not receiving food. Chal, Francis and I went out for a walk after supper, and I had the best laugh that I have had since being in Russia. We went up to the top of the hill where they coast, and Chal slipped; before he could regain his feet he had slid clear down the hill, you should have seen and heard him, it sure was good. "Heigh ya" he said, "I have never seen anything like this!" It has been awful cold today. You should see the rivers here in Russia, they are a regular thoroughfare. We were in the City the other day and I saw a boy drawing water from a hole and remarked what a funny place for a well. Francis said that is no well it is the river. All kinds of traffic use the ice covered river as they would a street. With a Good-Night kiss and hug to you and Ginger, as I must go to bed; after reading the ninety first psalm.

12/20/18. This has been one of those days that you read about in the books on Russia. I thought it had been cold before, but it was like a day in mid-summer as compared to this day. This morning it was 45 degrees below zero and not above 31 degrees below during the day. You surely must cover up every part of your body or it would be frostbitten. I surely am getting classier every day. Today I received a cook stove and am to get a swell cook, who can make pastry and everything, so we are going to live high. Honey, I saw the classiest Samovar you ever laid eyes on, and I am going to get it. The Russian Commandant of the Miass R.R. Station has it and I am going to fix his teeth for him, in turn for the Samovar. It is new and never been used. He has one that they have used twenty two years, and it is never without a fire on it at night time, they keep it going during the day, so that you can have a cup of tea at any time.

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21/12/18.

I was unable to finish writing to you last night as I was finishing the last sheet Dr.Mikulasek came in and stayed for a long talk. It was ten o'clock before we had dinner,so you can imagine what a talk we had. I have not moved into my new car yet as there was some changes to make,expect to have it by Tuesday,so I can celebrate Christmas in it I hope you land in Chicago tomorrow,on schedule time. Oh,hew I do envy you and all the folks at home; and wish it were possible for me to be with you. Tomorrow morning I am going into the City to see Dr.Mikulasek about many things connected with my work with the second regiment. Honey,sometimes I get so lonesome for you and Ginger that I think I cannot stand it any longer. I keep hoping and hoping that the conditions will become so settled here in Russia that we can go home,but I think it is a hopeless mess here for some years to come. Of course the Czechs will go home. They are not fighting any at the present time,only one regiment on the fighting front,all the other troops are back in Barracks most of them at Ekaterinberg. Second regiment is here in Miass. First regiment is at Kurgan. Third regiment is at Zlotoust. Tenth at Petropavlovski. Fifth,sixth,seventh,eight and ninth are at Ekaterinberg Engineers,Sappers,Cavalary,and Aviation Corps are scattered at various points. The Staff are located at Gelyabinska, as well as many troops. May God continue to watch over us all,until we meet again. With oceans and oceans,of love,kisses and hugs to you and Ginger dear.

Yours ever,
Charles

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Mrs. Harriet W. Irons,
 1032 So.Scoville Ave.
 Oak Park, Illinois,
 U.S.A.

P.S. This letter may be many days reaching you an account of the trouble Kostov vs. C.S.A.

Miss, Russia, Jan, 2nd, 1919.

My Darling Wife:-

It is now ten o'clock here and twelve noon in Chicago. When I finish this letter I am going to bed and you no doubt will be having your lunch. There is a big doubt in my mind as to whether all letters I have written you lately reach their proper destination. Conditions are still awfully unsettled here, and throught Siberia. Semenov is still causing trouble, and the Bs. are very much alive yet. We received word today of the capture of Ufa by the Bs. and that the Russian Army is in retreat, we have been expecting the Russians to give away. The French regiment which was at Ufa passed thru here yesterday going East. We received orders today to hold ourselves in readiness to move at a moments notice. The second regiment just got located and now must leave their winter quarters and move to some other spot, where the climate is not so hot. We hope to get away before the arrival of the Bs. of course there are many of them here at Miss, but they keep under cover to a certain extent. Last Monday evening Major Dr. Mikulasek was here visiting me, and it was about eight o'clock when he started home for the City. He got about a third of the way when Bang-buz went a bullet by his head- he quickly turned his horse and beat a hasty retreat. They fired about twelve shots at him, but fortunately none of them hit him. He came back to my cars and spent the night with me. Early the next morning some returned Russian prisoners tried to break in my car, and the Czech soldier had to give them the bayonet. One must be on his guard all the time here. I never go out unless I have my Automatic ready for use and a quick draw. Your gun is what gets you respect here in this land at present. I received word that I am to be appointed Dental Surgeon for the second reg. remaining with them permanently, as some more Dentists have arrived and they have enough to appoint a man for each regiment. Even then we will have four thousand men to treat. In thirteen working days, I saw 324 patients and extracted 1630 teeth. I have the patients divided into three classes. 1st. those for Ex. 2nd. those needing artificial teeth. 3rd. those needing fillings. Of course those for whom I extract teeth will need plates too, but I will make them later when their mouths are properly healed. We have heard that in a few weeks the Czechs are going to start for home, of course my regiment with the first reg. will be the first to go. I am expecting my Commission soon from the Czech Army, I do not know what they will make me. My uniforms and all will be ready Saturday, so I can now dress as a Czech Soldier. I have had a dandy riding horse assigned to me, as well as a sleigh and horses, so you can see that I am being well treated. How, I do wish you could be here to go with me for a ride in the sleigh. Really, Honey, we must visit Russia one of these days when things are again normal. It is a wonderful country, full of many interesting things, and people. I am trying to master enough Russian to get along, it is not near as hard as Chinese; but there are some awful words to pronounce. Honey, I really had a wonderful New Years eve. We went to A Czech Entertainment by the Band and soldiers of the second reg. It was a wonderfully well arranged programme. I have not seen any thing that I have enjoyed as much in many a long day. There were sketches, pantomime acting, Chorus of 100 voices, Gymnastics, Acrobatics, and the concert by the band and Orchestra. Honey dear, I do not think I will ever be the same after this long separation. Instead of my becoming accustomed to the change, it works just the opposite- it keeps growing on me so that I am just all the time weeping for you and feeling blue. Life without you is not worth living. Oh, what a joy it will be to have you near again. If I could have

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my greatest wished granted it would be to ask to be with you and Ginger this night. I would not care where we were,if only I could be by your side. Sometimes I get to thinking of you so hard that I can almost feel you by my side then comes the awakening . You say that our separation is harder on you than me,I fail to see it that way. Of course I have my work and am interested in it, but outside of that I have nothing. There is no one I can go out with and talk too. The only ones who I can carry on a conversation with is Chal and my interperter. You are home and have all your old friends ,and will not miss me half as much as I do you. Remember this honey dear,that should I never return please forgive me for all the times that I made you unhappy, I know that I have never treated you as I should have,and it has been a big sore spot with me since I got off up here and thought over my past life. I can assure you that none of my offences were premeditated and all the naughty things I have said were uttered in moments of thoughtlessness,for there never has been a time since we were married that I would not have gladly sacrificed my life to have saved you from all dangers.Honey,should the God of all call upon me to go WEST and I never see you and Ginger again,know that I died with your name upon my lips,with only one regret that we might have been happier together than we were at times and that I could have left you and Ginger better prepared to face the future financially. Grant that Ginger may be able to secure the kind of an education that I would want her to have,that she may grow up to be an honor to the name she bears-to love and respect her Mother at all times and under all conditions. Forgive me honey,if I am pessemistic tonight. I am awfully blue and one never knows what might happen. Pray that we may be spared,and that we may spend many happy years together yet,if not we will meet in Heaven. With oceans and oceans of love and kisses to you and Ginger, Fred,

Your own,
Charles.

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