
A HILLSIDE CHRISTMAS

little personal things she knew he would need. And the letters she had written him—how cheerful she had tried to keep them, sometimes even making up a happy story to tell him in order to have him “feel good.” Always avoiding the truth about John—telling him she was well and happy, she and John together. Yes, she had lied about that, to keep his heart up. And when those dark days had come when food was restricted and so high in price, she had gone without, and as she pondered there her thoughts grew bitter again.

Why was there so little bread and so much beer?

Her poor weak John had forgotten his promise—he had fought, but his enemy did not fight in the open, and was allowed to roam at will, unrestricted, to attack one in the dark places. So her boy had fallen.

As she thought of those days she had to close her eyes tight to keep the tears back, and the thin, white hands on the coverlet clasped till they hurt, to smother the sob in