

Mother's Pet and the Army Parcel

My Own Dear Pet, (who has been successfully "combed out" and relentlessly "roped in")

I was thankful to hear of your safe arrival in camp, but very grieved to hear of the horrid, vulgar men you have to eat and sleep with. My own darling boy, how you must suffer! What strange names your new friends have! and what is a glass-blower and where is St. Helens? For your sake I shall try to like the plumber and the rat-catcher in your hut. But are these men new soldiers or are they local men employed by the Government to keep your hut nice and clean?

After reading your sad letter, I thought for a long time, and without saying anything to father, I decided to send you one or two useful things. I hope you get the parcel safely. There is a large roll of cotton-wool—medicated, of course. Do you know, Percy, I don't think I shall like your drill-sergeant! He seems to be a very horrid man, and ought not to tell you to go to—that place your dear, dead uncle sometimes spoke of. Whenever you think he is going to say something naughty, just put a piece of cotton-wool in your ears. Now isn't your mumsie clever? Let me know when you want some more.

The Eau-de-Cologne, made in England needless to say, is to bathe your feet with every night. The darling little gold tooth-pick I want you to make a present to your plumber friend who seems so fond of you. You remember you said it was the plumber who sat next to you in the dining hall, and who picked his teeth with the prongs of his fork. If he doesn't like the design I can easily change it. And now, dear Percy, do not trouble to remind him of that 5/- he borrowed from you: he seems to be a very sensitive man.

I wonder if you will like the little gold tea-cloth I am sending you? Your initials are worked on it, so you won't lose it in the wash.

Do let me know if you receive the parcel and what the plumber thinks of the gold tooth-pick.

Heaps of love from your darling mother who stays at home and thinks of her boy.

P. S.—Your father has just peeped over

my shoulder and read this letter. He has gone out of the room laughing so I guess he approves of what I am sending.

Letter from the "darling boy", which crosses the other letter in the post.

Dearest Mother,

I find it is the correct thing here to receive parcels every week, so I want you to send me one if you will. I should like half a dozen red handkerchiefs. They cost three pence each, and you buy them in Edgeware Road. Mr. Ricketts, the plumber I wrote you about, says there is nothing like them. This is quite true, so I must have some. Have you ever heard of chewing gum? Mr. Timmins, the man who blew glass, is very keen on it. Some day he is going to tell me where he blew it to. He says you can buy it at the chemist's shop. I think half a crown worth will do to start with.

I have run out of cigarettes, but I am thinking of smoking a pipe. There is a very popular brand of tobacco here called shag. The men simply won't smoke any other kind. Does father know it? It is almost black in colour, and seems to be an oriental blend. I have not tried it yet. I shall want quite a lot of this.

Yes, and liniment—lots of this. Send sufficient bottles to fill a bath. Also, a beef-steak. Mr. Timmins says there is nothing like it for a black-eye. I like Timmins. My eye is nearly better now. I must have a very large bottle of prussic acid.

Your own boy,

Percy.

P. S.—The prussic acid is for our sergeant. Mr. Ricketts says it is the very thing for him.

(Editor's Note—This is the second of a series of offerings from the pen of the Rev. Reece Evans, of Haslemere, who writes for several of the larger papers. In this manner we thank him for his courtesy in contributing to *The Clansman*, and we hope to have further "letters." And while we are speaking of him, just let us mention that the popular pastor is a firm friend of the men in uniform and that all ranks are doubly welcome at his services at Congregational Church. He makes you feel at home.)

Watch for our new series, "Advice for All Ranks."