

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

DEAR SIR,—I am quite aware that most of your readers may be incensed at the thought of the Censor having a grievance. On the contrary, they feel that they have unlimited complaints to register against my august self. Censoring letters is a thankless task, in spite of the inspirations for one's own correspondence that may be derived from letters of absolutely identical content, and yet addressed to Mabel and Clarissa and dearest Jane. When one runs out of ideas for one's own sentimental correspondence, one only has to apply for the Censor's job in order to tap an unfailing source of new thoughts and impressions. With regard to this the Censor has no complaints to make.

But what does it mean when I find on the back of an envelope the letters, "S.W.A.K."? Does the writer imagine that the man who licks the flap really wafts an osculatory caress to the fair recipient? Or that the lady would wish for such a thing from a mythical person of doubtful age and beauty? If not, the Censor is sailing under false colours, and the lady searches in vain for the thing signified. I know one Censor who unfeelingly seals all such envelopes with a sponge! Naturally, I remonstrated with him; but the utmost reform that I could manage was moistening the flap with wintergreen tooth-paste, so that the seeker after hidden caresses might imagine that the sender had been chewing gum.

I therefore request that amatory writers kindly refrain from the use of this cabalistic sign.—Yours, with a frown,

THE CENSOR.

(We regret that we are personally unable to meet your modest request, as there are no girls on our correspondence list. But we gladly pass the suggestion along.—Ed.)

DEAR SIR,—I hopes as how you'll excuse the liberty I ups and takes in writing to you but I am a soldier of the King one of these here soldiers what they sings about and Ive got a grievance which I asks of you to pass to the King its about my Quarter Bloke here I am a fighting soldier up in the trenches and there he is back in camp and I says as how his duty is to stuff his men and does he do it no he dont and does he stuff himself not arf he dont lumme Mister editor only yesterday after doing eight parades I asks him for my issue of rum and he ups and tells me to go to I dont use no bad langwidge but you knows where he means, and he tells me to drink water and I ups and says if that stuff rots yer boots what will it do to yer stumuck him what I sees all the time riding upon a horse and me a soldier what beats it up on my hoofs and am I to be refused my rum I says no I says and I says as how I wants you to write to the King about it.—Your loveing freind,

PTE. BOOZEHARD.

(We can only say, in reference to the foregoing doubtless justified complaint, that the matter is being given serious consideration. Wait and see.—Ed.)

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QUOTH THE KAISER.

THE Kingdom of mine is too small, you'll agree—
Too small for my legions, too tiny for me.

You cannot expect me to move and to prance
Unless I can capture the vineyards of France.
And even with France more room must I have,
So why not annex all the land of the Slav?
'Tis a pity Great Britain to leave in the cold,
And that's why those islands I'm going to hold.
Turkey's the country to rob and to fleece,
And then I can turn my attention to Greece.
The Japanese Navy I'll tow into Kiel,
And China 'ill be made all my power to feel.
Of course, in my clutches I keep sunny India,
And rob all the Princes from C.B. to Seindia.
I'll overturn India, causing her pain;
And then I'll exterminate Servia and Spain.
To colonise Afric and Egypt's my job,
And also American millionaires I'll rob;
In fact, I'll be King of the World (that's my rôle),
And prove to all nations I'm right up the Pole.
And when of the world I really am boss,
I'll decorate "Gott" with the great Iron Cross.

(From "The Snapper," the monthly Journal of the East Yorkshire Regiment, April, 1916.)

THE SUGGESTION.

WHEN I joined the Vics as a new draft, among the first things I was told was that the C.O. would welcome any suggestions for the betterment of the men, or for the confusion of the enemy. After my first trip in the trenches an idea occurred to me. Now don't run away with the notion that this happens so seldom that it is alone worthy of record; but I mention this fact in the ordinary course of narration.

The idea was a good one, and I was sure it would make a fine suggestion for the C.O. I talked it over with my chum Tom, because I wanted his opinion. Tom and I have known each other for years, and he has been with the Battalion from the start, so that I thought his opinion would be worth having. Besides, I was afraid of talking of it with anyone else of the draft, because they would want to pinch it and let the C.O. think it was their suggestion. Tom has just been made a lance-corporal, so that shows he knows a thing or two.

Tom listened to my suggestion very kindly, and told me to go to the C.S.M. in the morning and ask to be paraded to the Company Commander; and he finished up by giving me a pat on the back and a friendly smile, and telling me (what I am really rather modest about repeating, but he did say it) that he was sure I would be a sergeant some day soon, for there was room at the top for a fellow with brains.

Next morning Tom was good enough to speak to the C.S.M. for me, while I was waiting to be paraded before the Captain, and I could not help seeing the Sergt.-Major's eye light up when he heard there was one man anyway who had used his grey matter. When I got before the Captain I saluted smartly, but I did not know how to begin; so the Sergt.-Major helped me out by telling the officer I had a suggestion to make. "Yes, my man," said the Captain, "what is it?" "I got the idea, sir," I said, "when two men were buried in our trench." And then I told him what my suggestion was.

I could see that he was pleased with me by the way he smiled, and he said he was glad to perceive that I was taking an interest in the work. Then he told me to go to the Orderly Room, and he himself would speak to the C.O. about me. I said "Thank you, sir," and saluted.

I felt rather nervous in front of the C.O., but my Company Commander was there as he promised, and he whispered to the Colonel about it. The Sergt.-Major said, "Man wants to lay a suggestion before you, sir." "What have you to say to me?" said the Colonel. "Sir," I answered, "two men were buried by the explosion of a shell in our trench the other day, and when we dug them out they were nearly suffocated. I would suggest, sir, that men should put on their respirators during a bombardment so that if they get buried they will be enabled to breathe."

"Well, you know, my man," said the C.O., "we cannot have this sort of thing in the Regiment. Discipline must be maintained. Don't let it happen again. Five days' C.B."

"Left turn! Quick march!" ordered the Sergt.-Major, and I was outside before I had time to speak.

Of course it was all a mistake; but it was a very unfortunate mistake.

They call me "Respirator" in my platoon now; but as soon as I have finished my five days, I intend to go to the C.O. again, and then things will be put right. It is a perfectly good suggestion.
G. S. B.

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ODE TO A BATH-MAT.

IN a dug-out where we lived (I should say "existed") for a few days lately, our roof was simply a bath-mat covered by a ground-sheet. Hence the following:—

Little Bath-mat, staunch and true,
What should we without you do?
You keep away the dust and mud,
And save us from the drenching flood.

I hope you'll never meet a shell
(You may some day—you ne'er can tell);
But if you do, just stiffen some,
And it will bounce back on the Hun!

W. E. C.

(Yes, it will; I don't think.—Ed.)