

EPISTLES
TO A
BELOVED

HR
PR 9200
A1 E8

To His Honor Judge Ervey.

1918.



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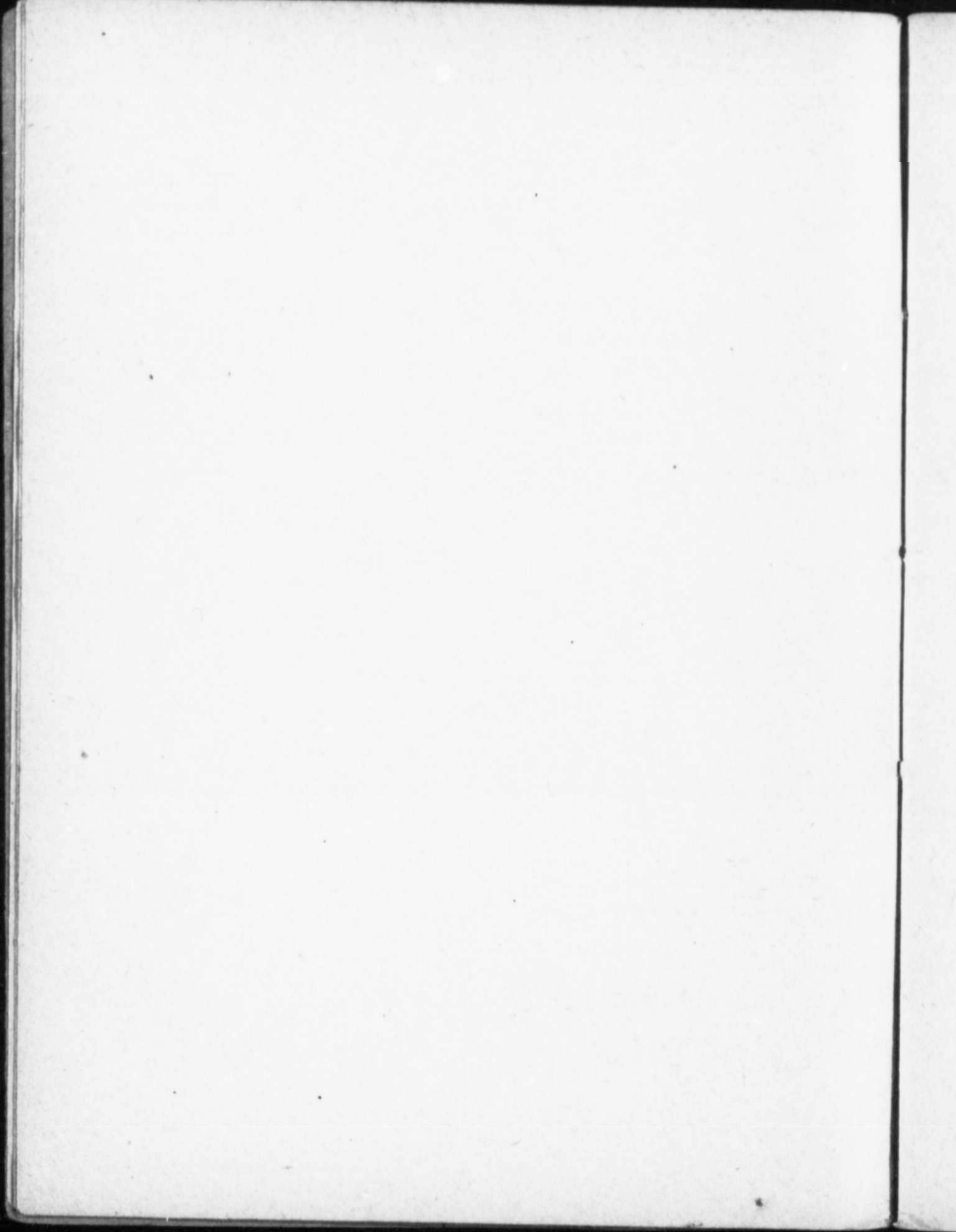
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PREFATORY NOTE

The writer of the following letters (to whom they would appear to have been returned, as they were found among his effects) was one of those who volunteered and went to the Front among the first of the Canadian Expeditionary forces. He was mortally wounded "somewhere in France." The lady to whom they were addressed, who was resident in British Columbia, has also passed away. The letters, most of which were written from an Ontario settlement, would seem to be fragmentary. They have been placed in the order in which they appear to have been written, although only to one was any date attached, and titles have been affixed to some of them.



PROLOGUE

Ah mistress fair! and thou wouldst me endow
For just a little while, with thy sweet grace,
And let me speak—as I might to thy face—
Then would I say: I know not when nor how
The blood within my veins did warmer flow
With joyous throb, than when I heard, through
space,

Thy voice interpret choice melodious lays,
In lucid tones of rich and pure alto.
As Heaven hath on each bestowed a gift,
Some talent that may blazon bright a name,
So thou'rt dowered with the power of song,
And charm of mien, and those rare traits that
lift

Man from the clay; which set aglow the flame
Of pure desire, and make him noble, strong.

INVITATION

I.

Oh, dearest lady, teach me this I pray,
What I may do to gain a little place
Within thy gen'rous heart, e'en for a space,
And I will give thee worship day by day,
And come to thee in love's endearing way,
Tò win a trifle of thy gentle grace.

II.

If thou wilt only grant me this one boon,
And let me woo thee for thine own sweet sake,
Then will I serve thee truly, and will make
Thy lightest wish a precept, and attune
My life to thy desires—I would as soon
My honour lose, as this my vow forsake.

III.

I will demean myself in noblest way,
If but the treasure of thy trust can fall
Upon me; I will be thy servant loyal.
For is there nought that I can do nor say
Which will with weight of truth convey
My soul's surrender to the passion royal.

IV.

'Tis thee and thee alone that canst arouse
This passion royal within my breast;
None other hath the charm at her behest
To make me constant to her own sweet cause,
Nor to the duty love so plain avows
To all who enter on the glorious quest.

V.

Oh mistress fair, not strangers I and thee;
Thyself have I adored in secret, long,
And heard with joy thy sweet voice raised in
 song,

Whilst we together 'neath the same roof tree
Have lived and moved. Ah! canst thou see
That love hath filled my heart and made me
 strong?

VI.

'Tis thus I am emboldened now to plead,
Upon my bended knee, and crave the gift
Of thy most beauteous smile, to lift
Me to the Emyrean, beyond the need
Of mortal longing, and to be indeed
No longer in life's maelstrom lost, adrift.

VII.

Oh, if this gentle gift thou canst bestow,
I shall become as one by Heav'n endowed,
And walk the earth of my full manhood proud,
And, like some old time pilgrim, I will show
That I can make a pledge and keep a vow,
To win the love of one beyond the crowd.



REALIZATION

To-night the moon rides high, supreme,
Flinging her silv'ry glow
Across the mighty span of Heaven's dome,
And too, on me below.
Happiest I of mortals on the earth
Now I thy love possess.
Dear, I will strive to prove that I am worth
Thy trust and gentleness.

And though I am removed by many a mile
From thee, my heart's desire,
I gain sweet solace from the thought serene,
That the argentic fire
Of night's fair queen on thee as well doth
shine;
And fancy thou wilt gain
Inspiring thoughts amid her beams—the sign
Of love's triumphant reign.

Can you, dear, understand what I now feel?
How full of joy my heart,
To know thou art my own for all, for aye;
That though we are apart,
With distance great between, still we can lay
Our hearts together, find
Sweet comfort in our souls' affinity,
And love, full true, to bind?

Oh I am glad to hold thy trust;
Yet for the nonce it seems
A wondrous thing that thus should be fulfilled
The tenour of my dreams;
And that my heart's fond hope, for many a day
Should be at last attained—
Tho' in thy bosom's just and gen'rous way
My faith hath e'er remained.

Not all the years that I have spent of life,
To gain this rare hearts ease,
Do I lament, nor would I thee possess
Anew, for perfect peace ;
And I have no regret, just mem'ry sweet
Of all my bosom's pain,
Which now, as joy, I squander at thy feet,
And live my youth again.

For in that time of hope, with doubt and fear
Lest I should not be thought
By thee full worthy of thy priceless trust,
My soul, tho' oft distraught,
Hath, by its searching trial, with faith grown
strong,
And proven thus, to thee
And thy sweet service now doth it belong
On to eternity.

GREETING

Spring hath come in all its glory,
And thy birthday, too, is here,
So I send thee this my greeting,
That thy heart, to me so dear,
May be full of rare rejoicing,
Knowing that I love thee well;
And that thee I hold more precious
Than poor words of mine can tell.
Dear, may this natal day of thine,
Each year to thee more richly bring
Increasing joys, so that thy life
May ever be one long, sweet Spring.

EXULTATION

I.

I had been wishing for a missive sweet
From thee, my own, and as each day wore on
To eve, I have in hope and expectation gone
Afoot, well nigh a league, thy gift to greet ;
But Fate my ardent wish did seem to cheat,
And my poor heartstrings play upon.

II.

Yet Fate can even to us sometimes be
In kindly mood, and gentle in its might ;
Whereof in witness stands my joy this night.
Elation, such as is in verity
Born of that love which I do bear to thee,
Pervades my being, and my soul doth light.

III.

Sweet, as I homeward tramped the prairie
plain,
I connéd o'er thy precious script,
And every word and sentence gently lip'd
Aloud upon the tranquil air, to gain
The sense of thy heart's pulse, as thou didst
train
Thy hand to trace the thoughts that outward
trip'd.

IV.

Thus o'er the distance, that might weary be,
I sped, of time unconscious, or of place,
Or whether mine was quick or laggard pace;
And I did seem to walk ethereally,
Without a thought of earth's proximity—
'Twas thus because of thy most loving grace.

V.

E'en human kind doth smile upon me, too,
This night, the why I am endowed
By thy pure love with joy; the crowd
Doth seem to comprehend it all, and view
Myself with tolerance, as if they knew,
Or I proclaimed my happiness aloud.

VI.

Aye! I am rich indeed—made thus by thee—
In happiness, and glad in soul's true peace:
Nor is there aught that could my joy increase,
Except thine own sweet presence near to me;
And that rare pleasure, that felicity
I shall enjoy full soon, if Heaven please.

VII.

Beloved, soon will I come unto thee,
As thou hast bidden, it is thy command;
I, by the magic of love's potent wand,
Eager, my flight will wing from sea to sea,
Until I gain thy sweet vicinity,
And before thee, as a god, shall stand.

VIII.

But five days hence will freedom sweet be
mine;
Then, as the sun sinks in the west aglow,
From out this place, with joy and zest I go
Upon my journey; and days hence but nine,
That soul and body wholly am I thine
Will I then prove by kiss and sacred vow.

ADIEU

Dear heart! the happy day has gone,
And gentle night is speeding by,
So must I bid farewell, farewell,
And leave thee for awhile, my own.

Good night! Good night my love!
Good night! Good night my life!
Good night beloved! Sweet be thy sleep!
Good night! Good night! Good night!

Darling! Eve's hours, love sweetened, fade,
So tell me once again, again
That I am thine, and let thy lips
On mine in loving troth be laid.

Good night! Good night my love!
Good night! Good night my life!
Good night, beloved! Sweet be thy sleep!
Good night! Good night! Good night!

Sweetest! 'tis but a brief adieu;
Tomorrow soon to us will come;
The pain of parting's sweet because
The morn will bring me back to you.

Good night! Good night my love!

Good night! Good night my life!

Good night beloved! Sweet be thy sleep!

Good night! Good night! Good night!



A VALENTINE

Darling, I'm thy lover true,
And thou art my Valentine:
I have giv'n my heart to you
And for ever will be thine.
Let thy sweet smile always shine,
To destroy life's bitter rue.
Darling, I'm thy lover true,
And thou art my Valentine.

For thy constant love I sue,
That it may my heart entwine,
Bringing us each day anew
Sweeter joy of life divine.
Darling, I'm thy lover true,
And thou art my Valentine.

TO . . . IN APRIL

Sweet April, like a blushing bride, is here,
The month of all I love, not just alone,
Because her sunny days so well atone
For winter's cold and gloom, and thus doth
cheer

One's soul; but, too, because it brings me near
To thee, and in my heart thee doth enthrone.

For 'tis this winsome month, when hopes
abound

And promises so fair, which holds thy natal
day;

That festival of joy, glad time and gay

As 'tis to thee and I, when it comes round
Year after year, and each of us hath found
Occasion for delight in love's sweet way.

REPENTANCE

Beloved, I have wronged thee, and I plead
And ask forgiveness on my bended knee,
For those base fears that came to me,
And did by their intent mislead
My better self to doubt my heart's true creed,
Of friendship's perfect trust in thee.

Oh! I am filled with sorrow for my sin;
But this I promise: Never will I more
Thee doubt, nor fail thee in my faith most sure
For well I know there ne'er can enter in
To thy most noble heart, aught that is mean,
Nay, naught but what is just, and good, and
pure.

LAMENT

I.

Sweetheart, most treasured of all earthly joys,
Why am I thus neglected and forgot?
Why all these days and days should pass, and
not
A word from thee should come? Oh, when I
poise
My faith on hope one day, the next destroys
That faith, and misery is to me begot.

II.

Though firm my trust, my love both true and
strong—
On such my life is now indeed sustained—
Yet is my soul distraught, my heart is pained,
And every day of waiting seems too long.
Can I, unwittingly, have done some wrong,
And doubt engendered where pure faith hath
reigned?

III.

Have I been guilty of some lapse or sin?
Have I thy gentle bosom made to feel
Some hurt, by aught allowed to steal
Its venomed way, and show itself within
Some message from my heart, designed to win
A greater measure of thy love, for weal?

IV.

If I have erréd thus, thou knowest well
Beloved, 'tis not I would give thee pain
Intending it; I rather would refrain
From speech or written word than I would tell
Thee aught that might a tear or sigh compel,
Or even give thee reason to complain.

V.

Yet am I human, and sometimes the will
May its high place forsake and let the hand
Perform some act, which, like a dread fire
 brand,
Will quick destroy, or make some grievous ill.
If I have caused thy heart with pain to fill,
Then I in penance now before thee stand.

VI.

Oh! scarce have I the wish or power to sing,
No spirit have I for the charmed word;
I am just like a starving, homeless bird,
When winter doth her snowy mantle fling
Abroad—he hath not will his flight to wing
Toward the blue; heart sick with hope de-
 ferred.

VII.

I cannot think, within thy breast so fair,
There is a heart that would on me impose
Such wretchedness as this. Ah! Heav'n knows
How I have suffered; until cruel despair
Doth almost hold me victim in its snare,
And threaten to my better self depose.



EPILOGUE

Oh dearest mine—for that thou art, and will
For ever be, while Heaven gives me life—
I pray thee now forget all evil strife
With thy poor lover, and too, such ill
As he hath done to thee, and thy heart fill
With tender thoughts of him; so 'suage his
grief.

Ah! was it kind to show me thy disdain,
And wound my heart, because for love of thee
I was too prone to feel that other he
Hath done thee service often and again?
Or was it just to make me smart with pain,
And should my love be made a penalty?

My own! remember all the joy and bliss
That hath been ours in time now past and gone,
O'er months and years, since I thy dear heart
won.

Aye, too, forgive my seeming thoughtlessness—
I know thy worth the better now I miss
Thee from my life, and am left sad, alone.

Wilt thou me censure if I feel distressed
That thou art now beneath a roof with one
Who gains thy praise for every small thing
done?

Because I feel that thou I have caressed
So oft, art near to him—not me so blest—
Have I no cause for sadness? None?

Let not the happy past all count for naught,
The harvest of our mutual joy be waste,
Most treasured! Come unto me, ah, haste
To share the nobler life by true love bought!
Canst thou forget the sweets our lips have
sought
And found, and the enchanted taste?

Belovéd! keep on thy luscious lips a smile
For me, and take me to thy lovely breast
Each night, in feeling, when thou goest to rest,
And in thy prayers to Heav'n, ask awhile
That I may have the strength to reconcile
The things that are with what is for the best.

This is love's message. May it not atone
For some at least of my poor heart's concern?
Oh, let me live to study and to learn
Thy sweet desires, and make thy thoughts my
own.

Come thou and trust me fully, me alone,
That we in happiness may live as one.

Ah, loved one! to thee, to thee I sing
This little song to ease my aching breast,
I stand before thee free and full confessed.
Aye, dear, I trust thee. Hast thou not my ring
As pledge of this? Oh wear this sacred thing
Each day and night as love's own manifest.

