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THE LETTER "K"

As a rule, writes a correspondent who seems to like this sort of research, "K" is one of the least used letters in the alphabet but in the present war it has a great vogue. For instance, nations are killing one another through the Kaiser who says he is fighting for Kultur by aid of Krupp and Kluck. But the Koenig of Prussia in his ambition, has come up against the trio of Kings, who with the help of Kitchener's Khaki and Kilted army, whose Kits and Knapsacks are augmented by Knitting Ladies, and the Gurkhas' Knives. Krookies will knock the owner of the Kiel Kanal, the Koenigsberg and the Karlsruhe out of the ring.

"WAR"

Continued from page 6

shall never be forgotten by you. Remember, also, that you have made my life very happy. Except your small childish sickness, or the dread that I might lose you during the time of war, you have given me nothing but the keenest happiness; you have shared all my burdens with me, and for this I bless you, my darling one."

Another attack came on, and her groans of pain almost crushed my heart. Oh, this last frightful enemy, death! I remembered the sights of agonized sufferers on the battle-field and in hospitals! When I reflect that we soldiers sometimes joyously drive others on to death, that we urge full-blooded eager young men on to sacrifice themselves willingly to this terrible enemy, against whom even the weak and broken-down old people fight so bitterly—is it not revolting?

This night is frightfully long. If only sleep might quiet her. But there she lies, with her lids parted, suffering. Every half-hour I bend over her motionless, then I come away to write a few more lines to you, and then I go to her again. It strikes four, and one shivers at the unfeeling strides of time as it unrelentingly presses on to eternity, and at this very moment for this one passionately loved mother time must cease—for all eternity. But as the cold, outer world turns dull to our pain, so much the more longingly do we seek to fly to another's hand, heart which we trust and hope may feel some union of feeling. And so this white sheet attracted me, and therefore I wrote this letter to you.

Seven o'clock in the morning. It is over. Her last words were, "Farewell, my dear boy." Then she closed her eyes and slept. Sleep so sadly, darling mother. In grief I kiss your dear hands.—Yours in deepest sorrow.

FREDERICK TILLING

I have this letter still. Frayed and faded the pages are now. For twenty-five years it has withstood my kisses and tears. It was sent "in deep sorrow"; I received it "shouting with joy," for though there was not a single word of love in it, yet there was a plainer proof that the writer loved me than that he should turn to me at his mother's death-bed, to pour out his grief? In answer I sent a wreath of a hundred white carnations enfolding a single half-blown rose—the scentless white flowers for the departed, and the glowing blossom—that was for him.

CHAPTER IV.

Three weeks had passed. Poor Conrad Althaus had proposed and been rejected by Lilli. But his courage remained undaunted, and he visited us as before.

Expressing my surprise at his loyalty, I said, "It delights me that you are not offended, and it proves that you are not so serious, for despite love often turns into resentment."

"You mistake me, dear Constance," love Lilli to distraction. "First I thought it was you whom I cared for, then Rosa, but now I am certain it is and always will remain Lilli."

"That sounds very likely. What she will not marry you?"

"I am not the first man a girl has married to get rid of him. By-and-by she will realize how faithful and worthy I am, and that will touch her. You will be my sister-in-law yet, Martha, and I am sure you will speak for me."

"I certainly approve of you, and that is the way a woman should be won. Our modern young men find it too much trouble to strive and win happiness; they wish to pick it up without struggle, as they snatch a way-side posy."

Tilling had been back in Vienna for a fortnight without a sign to me. I know I appeared depressed, and could not blame Aunt Marie for reproaching me for my low spirits. She blamed my solitary existence, and urged upon me matrimony and devotions. "You have quite forgotten it is Easter," she said.

"My dear Aunt, I think that both marrying and going to confession should be done from the heart, and not for a remedy for depressed spirits."

"Have you tickets to see the foot-washing?" he said presently.

"Papa brought me some, but I do not really care to go."

"Oh, but you should go. There is really nothing quite so touching as this ceremony—the exemplification of Christian meekness. Think of it—the Emperor and Empress, in stooping to wash the feet of these poor old folks, show us how small and meaningless is earthly greatness compared with the majesty of God."

"To symbolize humility by kneeling one must feel oneself very exalted. This ceremony only tells this—'As Jesus is in comparison with the humble apostles so am I, the Emperor, in comparison with these paupers.' Does that express meekness?"

"What strange ideas you have, Martha. For three years in the country you have read such wicked books that your ideas have all become warped."

"Wicked books!"

"The other day I innocently mentioned 'The Life of Jesus' by Strauss, which I saw on your table, to the Archbishop. 'Merciful heavens,' he cried, 'how did you get hold of such a vicious work?' When I told him that I had seen it at the house of a relative, he exclaimed, 'As she values her soul let her throw the book into the flames.' Do, Martha, do burn the book!"

Next day, shortly after ten, dressed in black, we all went to the palace to witness the great ceremony of foot-washing. Our places were reserved among the members of the aristocracy and diplomatic corps. We found ourselves exchanging greeting right and left. The galleries were filled with a mixed crowd, but we felt quite distinctly superior to them as we witnessed this festival which was to stir us with humility.

Perhaps the rest were in a more religious mood, but to me the scene was no more than a mere theatre spectacle. There we were, exchanging salutations, as if from our boxes we were waiting for the curtain. The long table was set expecting the twelve old men and twelve old women who were to have their feet washed by their Majesties.

Suddenly my eye fell upon Tilling. He sat directly opposite us among the general staff, but he did not see me, and just then the twenty-four old people had taken their places. They were clad in old German costume, wrinkled, toothless, bent, fitting admirably this ceremony of their middle ages. We were the anachronism, and our modern make-up did not harmonize with the picture.

I was watching the face of Tilling, which showed traces of suffering and deep melancholy. How I longed to give him a sympathetic touch of the hand. And while the spectators sat breathless, awaiting the coming of the grandees of the court, he by chance looked my way and recognized me.

"Martha, are you ill?" asked Rosa, laying her hand on my arm. "You have turned pale and red in the same moment. Look! Now! Now!"

The chief master of ceremonies gave the signal announcing the approach of the imperial pair—certainly the handsomest couple on the continent. After them streamed in the archdukes and archduchesses, and the ceremony was to begin. The stewards brought in dishes of food, which the royal pair placed before the old people, making it more of a picture than ever—the attire, the utensils, and the processional giving it the festal aspect of an old Renaissance painting.

Scarcely were the dishes set on the table than they were removed again—by the archdukes, who were supposed also to need a lesson in humility. Then the tables were carried out, and the climax-scene of the foot-washing began. The washing as well as the eating was mere pantomime. The Emperor appeared to stroke the feet of each old man with a towel, after the officiating priest had made a show of pouring water over them. Stooping he glided from the first to the twelfth. The Empress proceeded with the old women in the same way, losing none of her accustomed grace through the stooping attitude.

I was asking myself what could be the state of mind of these old people from their point of view, as they sat in the bewildering company in quaint costumes, with their Majesties at their feet. It must have been like a half-realized dream, half-pain, half-pleasure, confusing their poor heads already so full of the stupor of old age. Perhaps the newness and solemnity brought a complete suspension of thought to their minds. The thing that stood out most clearly, no doubt, was the red silk purse with thirty pieces of silver which their Majesties hung about each neck and the basket of food they were allowed to take home.

The ceremony over, the greetings, gossip, and polite interchange of compliments began. But my only thought was, "Will he be waiting outside for me?" At last we got to the gate, and there he stood before me with a bow. As he thanked me for the wreath I had sent to Berlin, he took my hand and helped me to my carriage. The words came hard, but with a great strain, I managed to say, "On Sunday, between two and three." Another bow and we were gone.

My little red book revealed my excited anticipations, my most extravagant apprehensions that the meeting would reveal our mutual devotion. While I was writing the bell rang and I recorded myself as palpitating and trembling, for the last line was illegible.

He came. He was very reserved and cold, begged my pardon for having written from Berlin, and said he hoped I would forgive his breach of etiquette since he was so unreserved by his sorrow. He related something of his mother's life and last days, but not a word of what I was looking for, and I became very strained and cold in my manner. When he rose to go, I did not detain him or ask him to come again—a wretched half-hour.

I rushed to the open red book: "It is all over. I have shamefully deceived myself." I argued that he would never come again. Yet the world held no second man. Rudolf must now be my sole consolation—would he love me some day as this man had loved his mother? Oh, it is a foolish habit this diary-writing, what proof it gives one of human fakeness!

A heavenly Easter Monday found "all Vienna" on the usual drive in the Prater. The brilliant, dashing corso contrasted sadly with my depressed spirits. Yet I hugged my sorrow, for was not my heart empty two months ago, where now it had at least something to feed upon? A quick glimpse of Tilling down the drive, a bow and salute in passing, which I returned warmly, again roused my anticipations.

"Give me your answer. Will you burn the book?"

"Why discuss it, dear Aunt? We cannot understand each other in these matters. Let me tell you what Rudolf did yesterday"; and the conversation turned easily on her favorite subject, where we never differed, for in our judgment Rudolf was surely the most original, dearest, and capable child in the world.

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Continued on page 8.

He Beat the Postoffice.

The French postoffice once found itself bested by a man who refused to pay an excess fee. He was condemned to pay the amount in dispute and a heavy fine besides. He declared that the authorities would not extract a centime from him and set about having his revenge. He bought a plot of ground in the French Alps, twenty-seven kilometers from the postoffice, and there built a hut. In this he installed an old shepherd, in whose name he subscribed to the Petit Journal, to deliver which it was necessary to engage a special postman, there being no other habitation within a wide circuit. After a time the authorities prevailed on Nardin to withdraw his shepherd, whereupon they withdrew their claim and paid him a small indemnity.—St. Joseph News Press.

Woman and Work.

Women are today what they have been throughout the history of the race—good wives, good mothers, good pals, good sweethearts, good sisters. Women in industry are no new thing. Women have been in industry since time began, and the women who have gone out to factory, to office, to schoolroom, to hospital, to clinic, to platform, are but doing, outside the home, what their mothers and grandmothers did inside the home. To take three-quarters of woman's vocations outside the home and to leave her with manacled hands inside the home would be to let her beat her life out against the cave wall of a prison cell in an idleness that would be madness.—From "The Autobiography of a Happy Woman."

Women and Men.

Woman began at zero and has risen through ages slowly unfolded and risen. Each age has protested against growth as unsexing woman. Men might spin and churn and knit and sew and cook and rock the cradle for generations and not be women. And woman will not become man by external occupations. God's colors do not wash out; sex is dyed in the wool.—Henry Ward Beecher.

Winning a Bouquet.

Among his stories of Homburg in King Edward's days the author of "On the Track of the Great" notes the fashion of "bunching" (presenting bouquets to ladies) on the promenade and tells this story of King Edward and the Roman artist, Corrodi:

One morning dear old Corrodi was carrying around a bouquet of serious proportions of fine tea roses which he proposed presenting to an American lady for whom he was eagerly seeking in the large mass of promenaders. All at once he unexpectedly came across the prince, accompanied by Lady Cork. "Good morning, Professor Corrodi!" exclaimed his royal highness. "How very kind of you to think of bringing Lady Cork such a beautiful bouquet?" Of course there was nothing left for the genial Italian to do but to part with his flowers and go and buy some more for the American lady.

Inhaling Water.

Undoubtedly a number of bathers who are drowned meet their deaths from cramp. Cramp is liable to seize anybody at any moment, and when it comes in deep water few swimmers have sufficient presence of mind to turn on their backs and wait quietly until the attack has departed. So they go under. But there is another danger quite as imminent as cramp, though it is probably less known. This is water inhaling. A swimmer or even a wader is always liable to inhale spray through his nostrils, which, passing through the pharynx and behind the epiglottis or windpipe guard, gets into the windpipe and causes death. As one would expect, water inhaling is almost wholly confined to the sea and very rarely occurs in fresh water. All the same, it may happen anywhere.

Gaudy Birds.

For gay coloring the pitta doncinna of Borneo and Sumatra takes the lead among birds, its feathers being every color of the rainbow. The bird of paradise runs it close and is in addition a dainty dancer. One species of this digs a hole a foot in diameter, over which it places crossed sticks (as for a Scottish sword dance) and strews leaves and rubbish over them, thus forming a floor, on which it dances a pas seul. But the jacana and ypecaha, both species of the rail, can go one better, for besides being splendid little dancers they provide their own music the while.

Handwriting.

The English are said to produce the best handwriting of all nations; the Americans come next; the French write badly, especially the ladies; the Italians very poorly; the Spaniards scarcely legibly. The two last named nations continue to use many of the contracted letters, abbreviations and ornamental lines and flourishes which were common in most European countries a century ago.—London Mail.

It Depend.

"How do you pronounce s-t-i-n-g-y?" the teacher asked the young gentleman nearest the foot of the class. And the smart boy stood up and said it depended a great deal whether the word applied to a man or a bee.—London News.

Brozoening.

Bond. Don't you realize that marriage broadens a man? Benedict—Oh, yes, I suppose it can be put that way, but "fattens" is the word I've always used.—London Express.

Let us not talk ill of our enemies. They only never deceive us.—Housaye.

THE IMPERIAL CHANCELLOR'S LATEST MYTH.

What an extraordinarily ridiculous statement Dr. von Bethmann-Hollweg, the Imperial Chancellor, makes in his sermon to the German Ambassadors and Ministers when he says that "as early as July 24 the chief in command of the British fleet had taken secret measures for concentrating the fleet at Portland;" that England was therefore "the first great power to order military measures taken on a large scale," and that "her outward action tended to humiliate Germany and Austria."

The review of the British fleet off Spithead was publicly ordered long before the Austro-Serbian issue arose. After the review, the Ulsterite threats of civil war in Ireland made it expedient to keep the fleet together for a time, and it was while the fleet was thus assembled that the Austrian note was sent to Serbia.

There was no more mystery about the concentration and movements of the British fleet than there was about the location of the Atlantic Ocean. Nor did any German or any Austrian at that time dream that the presence of the British fleet at Portland was a humiliation to the Dual Alliance.

It took the German Imperial Chancellor five months to invent that particular myth, and while it may be creditable to his fertility of invention, it reflects no credit upon his statesmanship.—New York World.

THE CARE OF FURNITURE.

Ugly cracks and splits in furniture can sometimes be filled with beeswax so that they will hardly show.

For wiping off a varnished paper use warm water and paraffin—half a cupful of paraffin to a painful of water.

When leather arm chairs look shabby, they should be wiped off with a soft cloth, dipped in olive oil.

To remove old varnish from furniture, take three tablespoonfuls of baking soda and put it in a quart of water and apply it with a rough cloth.

Before washing any piece of willow furniture, brush it thoroughly so as to remove every particle of dust. Otherwise no amount of washing will get the furniture clean.

To clean deeply carved furniture use a soft, medium-sized sponge. Squeeze as dry as possible out of tepid water and go over the carving. It will take up all the dust. Rub dry with a soft cloth and you will be delighted with the result.

When a haze, caused by a dampness, appears on mahogany furniture, rub it with a soft linen cloth moistened with olive oil. The rubbing must be kept up until the surface is dry.

The care of the piano is not understood, as a rule, and so a valuable instrument often suffers. Always close down the piano at night and in damp weather. Open it on bright days and, if possible, let the sun shine on the keys, for the light prevents the ivory from turning yellow.

To apply varnish to dining room or bed room chairs that have many rungs, or slender back supports that splatter the varnish, when it is applied with a brush, use a soft, lintless cloth, not too large. Pour the varnish into a small vessel, adding turpentine to make it rather thin. This method is quicker than using a brush.

THE KAISER.—BUT

Said the Kaiser, "Make for Paris, Ere the British can embarrass With their Lilliputian guns and marionettes."

BUT the Allies balked King Billy

In his scheme so wild and silly And forced him to retire with fumes and frets.

Said the Kaiser, "Make for Calais, Let there be no shilly-shally, We must occupy the town before the Spring."

BUT the British guns are waiting

In a line undeviating, Just to let the Germans know how they can sting.

"Make for England!" shrieks the Kaiser;

BUT the ghost of Queen Eliza Stands beside him in the night with warning hand,

And our bulwarks on the ocean, Watching all this mad commotion,

Will transport the Teutons who may wish to land.

"Off to London!" shouts the Kaiser,

"With a Zeppelin surprise her: Drop it neatly on the palace of the King."

BUT our aeroplanes are ready, With an aim both sure and steady,

To bring down the bird of prey upon the wing.

Give it up, O Royal German! Call a Council and determine To forseek the rocking valley of the Aisne,

Sheathe your sword and cry for pity,

For each hill and plain and city You have gloomed with grief, or covered with the slain.