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LABOR AND THE WAR



American Federation of Labor
and the Labor Movements of
Europe and Latin America



PRICE, 50 CENTS

PUBLISHED BY THE
AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR
AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR BUILDING, WASHINGTON, D. C.
DECEMBER, 1918

Radical's Progress

A Record of Courage

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THE WOMAN'S PEACE PARTY

116 South Michigan Avenue

Chicago, Illinois

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EDITORS' NOTE

[The narrative which follows is made up of letters written by an officer of the British merchant marine to an American friend in close sympathy with the creed they formulate. These letters cover a correspondence of many years, the earlier dating from the South African War, where the writer distinguished himself by his courage in action, and some of the later from the Dardanelles campaign, which found him serving as chief officer of one of his Britannic Majesty's transports. The order in which the letters are printed has been designed by the person who re-

ceived and arranged them to throw into relief the writer's Progressive views toward Socialism; but no liberties have been taken with the text. To an individualist, it is interesting to note that the degree of tense social control now exerted by the state in Great Britain may drive a Socialist into the kind of revolt usually associated with individualistic doctrine. We may add that the writer has been known to the editor of the *Atlantic* for many years through much correspondence and many talks. We can vouch for the genuineness of the letters.—THE EDITORS.]

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JUN 26 1916

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I BATTLE

LIVERPOOL, *July 12, 1915.*

You will be wondering where I am and what I have been doing all this time. Your letter was here when I arrived home from the Dardanelles. I have been out there since the beginning, in February, as chief officer of a troop transport. We were under all kinds of shell-fire and rifle-fire, as well as being attacked by several aeroplanes daily, but we didn't get a scratch.

I am sick to death. I saw more men blown up in one hour out there than I saw killed all through the Boer War. I am cured of ever wishing to be a soldier again. You will appreciate why when I have finished my story.

After we landed our troops on April 25, we were turned into a distributing hospital ship. Over twenty thousand wounded passed through our vessel. It fell to my lot to sew up and bury the dead. To see the flower of the youth of Britain, Australia, and New Zealand, — and Turkey, too, for that matter, — mangled and maimed beyond recognition: not a man over thirty-five years and not one under nineteen years. . . . To see lines of men charging, with shrapnel blowing big gaps in their lines, makes one wonder if there is a living God who looks down and allows such things to go on.

I have a great liking for the individual Turk, and when I saw our Lancashire Fusiliers take a redoubt and pitch the Turks into the sea with the bayonet, I felt a great pity

for the poor, honest Turkish peasant. Notwithstanding all that appears in the press about the cruelty of the Turks and their inhuman treatment of wounded, in all the twenty-thousand-odd wounded who passed through our ship I met no single instance of cruelty or of wounds not honestly got.

April 25 will stand out as the day of horrors in my life. I suppose the landing against such odds was one of the finest things in history. Some poor chaps never got ashore. Boatload after boatload of troops grounded on the barbed-wire entanglements which stretched from the shore under water for thirty feet and not a man in them was left alive. They floated away later, filled to the gunwales with their dead.

On shore the sight was worse. So congested were the Turks in their trenches on such small land space that every 12-inch or 6-inch shell simply sent heads, legs, arms, and trunks of bodies flying in all directions. I think there must have been at least fifty heavy men-of-war, — British and French, — as well as torpedo-boat destroyers as thick as gnats, banging away all day and all night without a stop. From the giant Queen Elizabeth down, every ship was searching the Turkish trenches with guns of all calibres. Above, aeroplanes were spotting and bombing. Every living person in a circle of twenty miles was bent on taking life or mangling some other person. This carnage was between men who had never exchanged a cross word; who had never even seen one another.

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I don't know whether we as a nation can hate. I must say that, after taking aboard a couple of thousand wounded of our own men, I felt hot all over and cursed the Turks all I knew how; but when it came to taking wounded Turks aboard — well, I couldn't but help them all I could, especially when I saw some of our own slightly wounded men carrying badly wounded Turks up the gangway. What treatment they had been led to expect I don't know. The poor wretches had fear and agony of wounds written all over their faces. . . . What I saw in the Boer War led me to believe that the British Tommy is a gentleman at heart. What I saw on this ship only strengthened that belief and assured me that the heart of the British workingman is sound and clean. Our fellows had nothing more bitter to say against the Turks than that they were doing their jobs.

There was little rest for anybody either by day or night. If one wasn't actually at work tending the wounded or receiving them, the booming of the guns and the vibration of the ship made sleep, or even rest, impossible.

What I saw and went through has knocked the bottom out of me. I believe that I just escaped the madhouse by a hair's breadth. And when I was told to go back again I refused pointblank. There is no danger to the ships now except from submarines. I refused solely because I could not stand the sight of so much battered humanity. I would shoulder a rifle if they would take me: you know that I have offered myself four times and have been turned down each time. I simply cannot stand any more seeing men between twenty and thirty years old with legs blown off, arms blown off,

and great gaping wounds from shrapnel all over the body — youngsters struck deaf and dumb from shell-shock though not actually hit; and men stone-blind from the same cause.

A big Australian, six feet three, about twenty-seven, had a shell explode almost in his face. It threw him on his back and injured his back muscles. Just as he struggled to his feet, another shell, bursting behind him, threw him on his face and strained his stomach muscles. He was struck blind, deaf, and dumb. His mouth opened and shut continually, as fast as though he were eating. Two men had to be told off to keep his forearms quiet — they kept coming up to his shoulders as though he were at physical drill. His body shook all over.

We had him aboard one week. By that time his mouth had resumed its normal movement and he had got back the sight of one eye. Then he passed through us to another ship.

How would any one of your American jingoes like to be twenty-seven years old with both eyes shot out and both wrists shattered by shrapnel? The man I mean was a young Scot. I helped him up the gangway. He stood six feet three — a beautiful specimen of physical manhood. After a day aboard he suffered terrible torture from the heat of the weather and of the ship, and also from the swarms of flies attracted by the smell of blood. He could not lie on a cot, so we had to fence off a corner in the 'tween decks, carpet it with pillows and mattresses, and let him grope round in his agony. On the spots where the blood had soaked through his eye- and wrist-bandages the flies clustered in black clots. He moaned night and day and was scarcely conscious. He was to-

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tally blind, and even the sense of touch was denied him, because his wrists were so shattered that they would have to be amputated.

Another man — a Lancashire Fusilier — was shot in the intestines. His torture was frightful. He raved like an animal and died in agony.

The majority of the wounded men were unconscious, and died so.

One evening I buried twenty-seven of the best my country ever produced, all Scots Fusiliers. The words, "We therefore commit his body to the deep" are graven on my very soul. It is at this part of the service that the body is slid overboard. For full an hour after this first burial, the thought of these countrymen of mine being sewn up in blankets and dumped overboard like so many bundles of rubbish — I had a terrible craving to get at the throats of the capitalists and jingoes who are responsible for it all. Submarine commanders cannot be blamed for sinking Lusitanias. They are simply doing their jobs and obeying orders. Those who issue such orders cannot be got at; at least, not yet.

Day after day these burials went on. Later I refused to attend them. The finish came when one body stuck to the stretcher by reason of the blood having oozed through the wrappings and congealed. The body had to be pried adrift before it would slide of its own weight into the sea.

I cannot tell you any more just yet. I sicken as I write.

The stupidity of it all! — the wrong men doing the fighting and bearing all the suffering. Kindly-hearted fathers killing other kindly-hearted fathers at the behest of — whom? One ceases to wonder if mothers in the future will ask why they should go through nine months of labor and

then rear children, — for this. I should like to have had a few thousands of American mothers on the quay at Alexandria every time we discharged our freight of mangled humanity. Or, better still, those in your country who are clamoring for war: let them volunteer to come over as stretcher-bearers only.

It is horrible, horrible, too horrible. I have refused to go back. Come what may, I will have no more of it. My nerves are all in. Physically, I am not a coward. If my refusal to go back is moral cowardice I am content to let it go at that. There are no penalties attached to my not going back except the loss of my position with the company. My affair comes up in a day or two, and a few capitalists will sit in judgment on me, and perhaps without the least compunction they will damn my sea career of twenty-two years in twenty-two seconds. Well, let them do as they will. *I care nothing for the judgment of men who have never seen suffering or sorrow.*

I will take their dismissal if it comes to that. It will mean starting at the bottom again if I go to sea, but I will never do that. If I am dismissed from the company, then the sea and I have shaken hands for the last time. . . . I have turned the situation over in every possible way to see if I am lacking in patriotism. I find that up to the present I have done my job and served my country as few have done since the war started. Therefore I have made my stand, let fall what may.

And now let me speak of the United States. From what I have pieced together since arriving home, I gather that public feeling in your country runs high over the Lusitania affair. Many seem to be clamor-

ing for war. (*Who are these people and what do they know of war?* Who eggs them on, and for what reasons? Again I say, let them come over and serve as stretcher-bearers only. Or perhaps your jingoes are of the same breed as ours: do all their fighting in frock coats while the youth of the country do their dirty work for them.)

I think the Lusitania dead would be the last, if they could, to cry out for vengeance, and to sacrifice scores of thousands of America's best youth for their sakes. There must be another way out. There must be thousands of other ways if only the nation would keep cool and think. An American who urges his country to enter the fight is a bad American. It is frightful to think of thousands of such fellows as I have met over on your side being torn to pieces with high explosives. Within twenty-four hours at the Dardanelles we had twelve thousand men killed and wounded. Our losses out there far exceed those published. From cottage and mansion they came, from university and poor school. They represented the best we had. Your ranks would have to be filled with the same material.

By the time this reaches you I may be sweeping the streets. I'm extremely nervous, not on account of what the company may do to me, but from what I have been through lately. I don't sleep too well. I see mangled bodies and faces all the time. I'm up against it every way I turn: I cannot get into the firing line; I can't stand the job I've been on lately; and I stand practically condemned by the company. In the firing line one wouldn't see a tithe of what I saw at the Dardanelles,

because there we had aboard the mangled of all fronts, whereas, in the trenches, one would only see the wounded of his own immediate front.—What a maze of contradictions I am in! I seem to be fighting my way through to something—what, I don't know.

I am intensely interested in what the company may decide, because if the decision goes against me there will be a new life opening out. I don't dread menial labor if I can work out my salvation that way. Of all the questions I have fought out with the company—and there are many—this is the most interesting and perhaps the most vital. If I am dismissed, I suppose many will say that I funk'd it. Others, who know me, will not say so much: they'll probably say, "What a damned fool he was, and next in turn for command, too!"

Meanwhile, I am resting and playing with my kidlets, awaiting the judgment of the heaven-born.

The situation is ludicrous. Here I am, a man who fought through the Boer War; a man recommended for the Distinguished Service Medal; a man promoted from the ranks to troop-sergeant at one leap; a man who, plugging along with one kidney and minus two ribs, was mentioned in dispatches at the Dardanelles in April; a man who has been shot at with rifles, field-guns, howitzers, aeroplane bombs, and naval guns, and threatened by submarines; and yet I have to be judged by financiers who have never had a duck-rifle in their hands, to see if I funk'd going back to the Dardanelles.

If they want a plain answer to a plain question I'll tell them straight that I did funk going back to see so

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many thousand of my best countrymen mangled by devilish instruments of war. I know I have a wife and two children depending on me, but I am not afraid for them. I have been up against it before, and have won through, and I'll win through here somehow if I get sacked. I will admit defeat when I am in the grave, not before.

Excuse this letter. It is a disjointed affair. I am scarcely myself. You will hear again as soon as I have been judged by the heaven-born. Till then, do all you can to keep your country out of this mess.

LIVERPOOL, *July 13, 1915.*

The inevitable has happened at last. What I told you of in yesterday's letter came off today.

The money-bags tried me and found me wanting, and I have been asked to resign.

I went up without the slightest intention of walking back a peg. They seemed astounded at my refusal even at the price of dismissal.

So now I am out of a job, with a wife and two youngsters depending on me for the means to live. It has been the greatest fight of my life, and according to my way of thinking I have won out at the cost of my job. The opportunity was mine to walk a liner's bridge with a captain's tin hat on; but only at the price of keeping my mouth shut and my pen quiet. Your friend may be a fool, but he is honest enough to stand aside and take the blows when it comes to that, rather than to sail the seas hounded by capitalists and forced to do things which daily menace the lives of thousands of innocent travelers. I knew that I had to make my choice before the company would give me command. That was told me many moons ago.

The question that I have been asking myself since my dismissal is: Is it worth it all?

The only answer I can get from my inner self is: Yes, yes, yes.

My dismissal took place at 3 p. m. prompt. It is scarcely 5 p. m. now, so I've lost no time in letting you know.

What an intense sensation of relief I have! The cloud of years has cleared at last and left me once more in the sunshine—and with more fight than ever. The sea and I have parted at a time when command was in my hand. What I am going to do I don't know yet. I don't ask much of life if I can help my fellow man. Certain it is I won't go under. I am content to sweep streets or anything. I have confidence in myself now that I have been put through what was, for me, the supreme test; and I have confidence in the future even if, at the moment, I don't see daylight.

Your land-lubbing friend.

II

BONDAGE

[The following passages from letters of a much earlier period will explain certain allusions in the foregoing.]

You ask what started me on my course of radical thinking. Two incidents, both from the Boer War.

The thin end of the wedge entered my mind from seeing an old Boer farmer bayoneted. I myself had killed a man before that. But this day, as I was riding along, I saw a sergeant order an infantryman—a West Kent man—to capture an old Boer who was making for a horse,—his own, I fancy.

The man dropped out of the ranks and took after the Boer, who was

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an "Eighty-Oner," white-bearded, with black crape on his hat; they never surrendered.

"Halt!" yelled the Kent man.

The Boer kept on after the horse.

"Halt! you old beggar!" yelled the Tommy again.

The Boer paid no heed.

"I'll give you one more chance: up with your hands!"

The Boer kept on.

I saw the West Kent man take the step for the bayoneting—a purely mechanical motion. The old man reached around and gripped the blade with both hands. The Tommy gave it a twist. All the Boer's fingers dropped off. The Tommy drew his blade out of the two bleeding stumps and stabbed the old man to the heart. The Boer fell dead.

Then the Kent man unfixed his bayonet, wiped the blood off on his sleeve, fixed it again, and fell back into his place in the column.

"You beast!" thought I, and waited for him to pass me, expecting him to have the face of a fiend.

As he came near, he turned his head my way and I got a good look at him. It was a worse shock than the sight of him killing the Boer.

In his face was everything that manhood holds best. He was a fine-looking fellow—a man of character.

Two days before, I had killed a man myself. It was in a skirmish. My regimental chum sang out at me, "Step right!" I did so instinctively, and this fellow lunged past me, and fell with the force of his missed blow. I brought down the butt of my rifle on his skull and crushed it, as one breaks an egg.

All the rest of the day I vomited at intervals. Once I cried. I could not eat. Two days earlier had come a letter from my mother asking me

not to take life if I could help it. . . . It wasn't the letter. It was the physical shock of seeing a man's brains beaten in like jelly. I made up my mind then and there that I had had enough of patriotism.

Toward the end of the war I was detailed with forty-nine other troopers to act as escort to the present King and Queen. They were then Duke and Duchess of York. The honor was supposed to be ours.

Riding along the streets under the hot sun, between crowds of cheering people, and eyeing this undersized man, I fell to comparing him with the men of his bodyguard, forty-nine fine, strapping fellows. I cannot begin to tell you the shock it gave me.

That, for me, was the beginning of the end. The contrast between this Duke and the men of his bodyguard did the business for me. Later it dawned on me that I had been fighting an honest, hard-working Boer peasantry for the sake of a gang of London financiers.

If ever I take up a gun again it will not be in cold blood. But I'll fight for the poor against this rotten commercialism, even if I and my wife and children have to go down into the gutter for it.

April, 1914.

I have five men to work the life-boats. According to the company's books I have fifty—the captain and five officers, the four quartermasters (who steer the ship), the boatswain and boatswain's mate, and his servant (a boy of ten), the carpenter, the carpenter's assistant, the joiner—and so on. Actually, however, I have five. Five to keep the ship clean and work the boats. The rest have to be on station. The result is that we have to clean ship all night and work boats all day; we can't

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turn the hose on the decks when the passengers are about. And the boats are in terrible shape, and getting worse all the time. I need fifty-five men instead of fifty men. Last trip I reported a raft with air-tank punctured, impairing its buoyancy. Nothing done about it. Capacity: thirty persons. She'd *drown* thirty persons. And yet I am expected to bring the ship in clean with her boats in working order. It simply cannot be done. And the money saved on extra men whom the company won't hire, the company is dragging out of our hides by overwork. I have a conscience. I won't let things go. So I work myself like a dog to keep things up. In Liverpool, after the last trip, I lay down on my couch for a nap, and slept twenty-five hours without waking. My wife and a neighbor put me to bed. Until I was told, I never knew how I got there.

We officers know what it is to be thirty hours on our feet. I have been forty hours without sleep or rest, living on my pipe. After a siege like that, we go to sleep while we are walking the bridge. Our bodies keep awake, but nothing under heavens can keep our minds awake. I have been waked by bumping against the binnacle as I walked, or by banging my head against a stanchion; or we even bump into each other. Heads soggy. Think quickly we couldn't, not if we *had* to.

November, 1913.

On that trip to New York our Hungarian crew deserted. The Balkan War had broken out and they were afraid that on the return they would be seized and sent to the front. We had to go to sea with a crew of Italian peanut-venders from

West Street, who didn't know the meaning of a nautical term, and could not even understand my language.

The first morning at sea I had to go down into the forecabin with a cudgel and drive them out. It was foggy and blowing a bit, and under such conditions the wind usually howls. No sooner were they on deck than she took the spray of a wave over her bow and drenched them; drenched me, too. With that they all fell flat on the deck, raising their hands and screeching "Madonna Christi!"

To get one of them into the crew's nest on lookout, I had to rig a tackle, pass a loop line under his armpits, and hoist him up. They couldn't even swing out a boat on its davits. We had to wait until dark before swinging out the two emergency boats which we always keep ready, and then we had to get the officers out to do it. Dared not do it when the passengers were about. With such a crew we were navigating a ship with two thousand souls aboard of her.

When we got back to Liverpool I told the general manager about this.

"What would you advise?" he asked.

"I'd advise, if you couldn't get a crew in New York, to get one in Boston, and if not in Boston, then along the New England coast where they grow real sailors, even if it cost you £100 to the man. That would be better than carrying two thousand people at the risk of their lives, with a crew that can do nothing, not even understand what is said to them."

"You are not a business man," says he.

"No," I said, "I am a sailor."

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"It came out all right; it was good business," was his remark.

But some of us have consciences, and such a reply as that doesn't satisfy the conscience of an officer who is entrusted with the responsibility for those two thousand lives.

September, 1912.

For the past month we have been idle in London, owing to the strike. I sent for my wife to come down and we took digs right in the slums of the dock. We wanted to see how the very poorest live.

The striking dock laborers in London have been quiet and orderly. It was in Liverpool that the rioting took place — the Irish element. My wife and I went among them where they were gathered by the thousands, and not an ugly word were we offered. I have gone down aboard ship at one and two o'clock when they would all be out in the streets, — they had nothing else to do, — and no one offered to molest me.

They told me it was hardest on the kiddies. Whole families were starving. I was amazed at the pluck of these men. It takes pluck to tighten your belt another hole each day and say nothing.

These fellows and their families were sober and clean: a very good type. They expected the strike to last much longer than it did, and were prepared to suffer accordingly. Even when they began to starve there was no sign of yielding. That's courage, when you have nothing to back you.

. . . Don't think our new Association [a seaman's union] is going to confine its operations to the betterment of sailor's conditions only. The traveling public is to be taken into consideration also. If ever I reach

the giddy height of command of a company passenger steamer, I feel, now, that I shall get sacked inside of a year. I'll be up against my conscience and the old order of things. I have now been elected a member of the Executive Committee in London. This may, very soon, bring my name into print; and it remains to be seen whether the company will have the intelligence to see in my actions a desire to remedy crying evils, or if it will look on me as a damned agitator and get rid of me as such.

April, 1913.

My career as a committeeman of the union was brief and stormy.

During the strike a meeting was called in London to indict the ship-owners for certain practices. The leading journals sent their best pressmen. The accusations were being read by a member of the committee.

I interrupted: "Those charges are not true."

"Are you with us or against us?" demanded the chairman.

"I am not with you," I told him, "when you make charges which are not true."

"How do you know they are not true?" said he.

"I can go aboard my ship and within an hour bring back copies of the company's regulations to prove it," I replied, "and I warn these gentlemen of the press that if they go to print with these charges, knowing that they have been challenged, I will go over their head to their editors."

The meeting adjourned in confusion.

"Couldn't you let this pass?" the committeeman said. "Isn't it better

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for our cause to allow it to go unchallenged?"

"Nothing is good for your cause which is a knowing falsehood," I told them, "and I decline to have any share in a struggle conducted on such lines."

July, 1905.

On that voyage we touched at Odessa during one of the pogroms. The ship lay directly in the line of fire from a height where the Cosacks were stationed. Sometimes the bullets would ping! against the vessel's side. We had to keep under cover. Close to the docks where we lay was a heap of the dead, — Jews, of course. To go ashore in the daytime was almost certainly to be shot. But at night we would crawl out, sneak ashore, and pull the half-dead living out from this heap of corpses and carry them aboard. Among others, we got out a woman and two of her children. I gave up my room to her. Two more of her children and her husband lay dead in the heap. She wept most of the time. . . .

Two years afterward, whilst I was "second-extra" on the run between Liverpool and New York, on deck duty, I was walking through the steerage one day when some one without any warning whatever threw an arm around my neck and kissed me. I flung away and saw to my disgust that it was an untidy Jewish woman. She seized both my hands and kept repeating, —

"Odess'! Odess'!"

Then it all came over me. She was the same woman we had dragged out of that heap, and was coming out to New York with her brother.

III

LAND OF PROMISE

September 1, 1915.

You may be rather surprised to hear of my new venture.

The fact is, I had it out with myself after finishing with the company, and have taken to the land, farming. Your friend is now a farmer.

In my last letter I merely said that the money-bags had decided to dispense with my services. The chairman, in a very nice manner, told me that after long deliberation and thought the board of directors had decided that I was not a proper person to command one of their ships, as my line of thought and speech and my many unofficer-like acts had led them to suppose that company interests would suffer unless I altered my views to suit company traditions.

I merely told them that I did more than an honest day's work for a day's pay, and beyond that, I considered that my thoughts and actions belonged to myself and I would take care that they were not influenced in any way by company dictates.

That ended everything. Their decision was made final, and from that moment your friend ceased to be a sailor.

Certain of the officials were taken aback at my attitude and expressed surprise.

"Gentlemen," I said, "your decision leaves me undismayed, and the cloud that has been hanging over me for years has parted and left me once more in the light."

Several offered me their services outside the company, but I declined them.

They asked me to remember my wife and two children. I replied that they were my care, not theirs.

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They seemed staggered, and concluded that I must be possessed of private means, and could therefore afford to stick to my principles.

All that now seems a long time ago. Since leaving I have had a happy time. I have walked a hundred miles on this island looking for a suitable place, and at last I have found one. Let me describe it to you.

Compared to my house in Liverpool, the farmhouse is a hovel. It is perched up on the mountain side with a glorious view and glorious air; also, one can catch a decent glimpse of the sea. There are eighty-seven acres of land to the place, a good lot of it heather-clad. It is situated close to the highest mountain. The post comes three times a week, and to post a letter means a four-mile walk. Grub is awfully difficult to get until I have a horse and cart. I've had to make a six-mile walk for it to town, and six miles back, using the baby-cart as motive power. Water for the house means a walk up the mountain side about a thousand yards.

But we are all happy. I have started with a hive of bees, a fifty-thousand colony. In time I'll get about thirty hives if the bees do well up here during the winter. What worries us most at present are the fleas. The place is swarming with them. The people who had the place before must have been dirty. Is it true that country people generally are so?

When I get the house in order, I am going to buy stock and implements and start ploughing up a few fields. I have built a small wall already. The place now looks like a jail. In fact, I've called it "B—— Jail." But there are great possibili-

ties in it. When I get really settled and known, I am going in for politics. Of course you will probably know that the island has Home Rule. In time, I think, I shall be able to devote quite a lot of time to having a spar with the feudal system which is so strong here. As an instance, a wife is a chattel. She cannot possess personal property: it all goes to the husband when she passes into the married state. There are quite a lot of such things that require modernizing. I won't be idle in the Cause.

It is going to be hard work for a year or so, and I have no illusions on the matter. So long as I have won my battle over myself and have had my scrap with capitalism, I am happy. The loss of social position doesn't cost me a wink of sleep. . . . Expecting this to happen some day, I have saved all I knew how, and I feel sure that I shall win over the critical period long before my savings are exhausted. We are out of writing paper and it means a twelve-mile walk to the nearest store, so I am using up sonny's scribbling pad.

October 3, 1915.

The pigs are fed, the goat milked, and I have just robbed the hens of an egg or two. So now I can sit down and thank you for your letter and book. I was painting the gate when the postman brought your letter this morning, just smartening up the place a bit before ploughing starts. Really, I am taking to work very kindly, though my hands are in a shocking state and my back gives me gip nearly all the time.

But it is glorious to feel that every clod of earth I break is not done for a man who thunders along at forty knots an hour in a motor car bought by the sweat of me and my like. Since I have been out in the wilds I

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have scarcely had the slightest headache. Before, I was all headaches, caused from threshing out the problems that meant either suicide or liberty. My position was untenable; more so than you can ever know. I had either to abandon my convictions and ideals, gathered in a life's journey, or get out. I was asked to accept company dictums, thereby strengthening my position and clearing all obstacles out of the way of future promotion. Fate—or something stronger—decided for me. I have lost friends and position, and according to many officers in the company, I have thrown away the substance to obtain the shadow. But you and I know which is the substance and which the shadow.

As I have told you, I knew long ago that I had to make my choice before the company would give me command. It may have been intention or it may have been accidental—the timing of it—after the Dardanelles, when I had reached the pinnacle of Chief Officership. Whether I would have been man enough to defy them if I had not been through the Dardanelles business I do not know; but I do know that no power on earth could have forced me to lend a helping hand at such wholesale slaughter again after what I saw and felt.

Whether my country is right or wrong in the cause of the war, I say that it is absolutely wrong to see countless thousands of its best youth slaughtered in such cruel ways. There must be other ways of settling such disputes, and to demolish monarchy and capitalism would go a long way.

Labor on our side is causing a lot of trouble. All unions are dead set against war profits, and friend Lloyd George more than anybody. It is

practically impossible now for any concern to make more than an ordinary peace-day profit. And Labor is right. Why, in the first months of the war, when war spirit was at fever heat, the men lost sight of the fact that whilst they were sweating and cheering, some firms were making 60% profits; others, over 100%, and others again nearly 200%. The Welsh miners were, I think, the first to resume their senses and ask what the employers were doing. The country got quite a shock. Why, the company was making more than three times the profit of ordinary years; and this in a year of war, when food and necessities are nearly 30% higher than in normal times. Ships were run with four instead of seven officers. The extra work came out of our hides without extra pay. After the Dardanelles business I was nearer the lunatic asylum than, I hope, I shall ever be again. One cannot work seventy hours at a stretch in a broiling sun with guns roaring night and day, airships dropping bombs, and men being mangled into lumps of unrecognizable flesh and bone, without its wearing one out. It was not so much the overwork as the thought that stabbed me night and day, that no small part of the class that caused this slaughter are lounging in places where their skins are as safe as in peace times. I used to see red and want to get at their throats.

I feel now that I can never destroy life again. The beasts I have so far will never lose their blood by my hands. I have a she-goat that follows me around like a dog. I could never hurt her. Many a good dinner I could have killed here—partridge, hare, or grouse—but I find it impossible to do so.

RADICAL'S PROGRESS

Why, when I went to the well the other day for water, out of it jumped a frog. I simply took it twenty yards away and let it go, knowing full well that it would hop back in again as soon as I cleared out.

This may seem to you an extraordinary state of mind for a farmer to be in, but the fact is, I have promised myself not to take life in any shape or form again if I can possibly avoid it. The Dardanelles and my bees have cured me of all inclination to be cruel to man or beast. When the weather is dry and I have a minute to spare, I sit by my hive and watch the bees work. I have them all over my face and hands, and I seldom get a sting, and then only from a tired bee returning with its hind bags heavy with nectar from the heather.

The adverse judgment of your friends on my conduct is interesting. It would be impossible, I suppose, for them to see the case as I saw it. And again, the majority of men are against destroying a structure of which they are bricks, or even perhaps the props and builders. Give them a dose of bloodshed such as Europe is having and give them the same causes of it; then, perhaps, they would find it impossible, as I did, to carry on. Let some of them be tried, and see how they ring. It is so hard for men who have been nursed all their lives to comprehend what human suffering is and what causes it. One must get out and see

it. To do this some men cannot pluck up enough courage; others do not dare for fear of social ostracism. Self, always. For a man to shoulder others' burdens and realize that he actually is his brother's keeper requires self-effacement, and I suppose no man can do good work until that self-effacement takes place.

At first it struck me as selfish and cowardly to bury myself out here. But what else could I have done? Even if I had the stomach for it now, the firing line would not take me. I have sworn never to serve capitalism again, and that means, of course, that I shall never again go to sea. As you see, I have simply been forced out of society.

. . . I'm scarcely myself even yet. In fact, I shall never be my old self again. The Dardanelles knocked that old self out of me, and has made me a bitter enemy of the titled and capitalist classes. I have always been opposed to them, but without hatred. Today I hate them with a hate that will die only with me. Those thousands of maimed men and thousands of others being blown into the air by shrapnel have seared me to my very soul. I only ask now to be shown the way to fight the causes responsible for such wholesale butchery.

No, comrade, I can never again be as you have known me. I have suffered too much from what I have seen.

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