

RING LARDNER

Simple Simon

In the Trenches, May 29.

FRIEND AL: Well Al we have been haveing a lot of fun with a bird name Jack Simon only the boys calls him Simple Simon and if you seen him you wouldn't ask why because you would know why as soon as you seen him without asking why as he keeps his mouth open all the wile so as he will be ready to swallow whatever you tell him as you can tell him anything and he eats it up. So the boys has been stuffing him full of stories of all kinds and he eats them all up and you could tell him the reason they had the bob wire out in front was to scratch yourself on it when the cuties was using you for a race track and he would eat it up.

Well when we come in here and took over this section this bird was sick and I don't know what ailed him only it couldn't of been brain fever but any way he didn't join us in here till the day before yesterday but ever since he joined us the boys has been stuffing him full and enjoying themself at his expenses. Well the 1st. thing he asked me was if we had saw any actions since we been here and I told him about a raid we was on the other night before he come and we layed down a garage and then snuck over to the German trenches and jumped into them trying to get a hold of some prisoners but we couldn't find head or tale of no Germans where our bunch jumped in as they had ducked and hid somewheres when they found out we was comeing. So he says he wished he could of been along as he might of picked up some souvenirs over in their trenches.

That's I of his bugs Al is getting souvenirs as he is I of these here souvenir hounds that it don't make no differents to him who wins the war as long as he can get a ship load of junk to carry it back home and show it off. So I told Johnny Alcock and some of the other boys about Simon wishing he could of got some souvenirs so they framed up on him and begin selling him junk that they told him they had picked it up over in the German trenches and Alcock blowed some cigarette smoke in a bottle and corked it up and told him it was German tear

gas and Simon give him 8 franks for it and Jack Brady showed him a couple of laths tied together with a piece of wire and told him it was a part of the areoplane that belonged to Guy Meyer the French ace that brought down so many Dutchmans before they finely got him and Brady said he hated to part with it as he had took it off a German prisoner that he brought in but if Simon thought it was worth 20 franks he could have it. So Simon bought it off him and wanted to know all about how Brady come to get the prisoner and of course Brady had to make it up as we haven't saw a German let alone take them a prisoner since we was back in the training arears and wouldn't know they was any only for their artillery and throwing up rockets at night and snipping at a man every time you go out on a wire party or something.

But any way Simon eats it up whatever you pull on him and some times I feel sorry for him and feel like tipping him off but the boys fun would be spoiled and believe me they need some kind of sport up here or pretty soon we would all be worse off then Simon and we would be running around fomenting at the mouth.

Well Al I wished you would write once in a wile if its only a line as a man likes to get mail once in a wile and I haven't heard from Florrie for pretty near a month and then all as she said was that the reason she hadn't wrote was because she wasn't feeling the best and I suppose she got something in her eye but anything for an excuse to not write and you would think I had stepped outdoors to wash the windows instead of being away from her since last December.

Your pal,

JACK.

In the Trenchs, June 4.

FRIEND AL: Well Al nothing doing as usual only patching things up once in a wile and it would be as safe here as picking your teeth if our artillery had a few brains as the Germans wouldn't never pay no tension to us if our batterys would lay off them but we don't no sooner get a quite spell when our guns cuts loose and remind Fritz that they's a war and then of course the Dutchmens has got to pay for their board some way and they raise he—ll for a wile and make everybody cross but as far as I can see they don't nobody never get killed on I side

or the other side but of course the shells mess things up and keeps the boys busy makeing repairs where if our artillery would keep their mouth shut why so would theirs and the boys wouldn't never half to leave their dice game only for chow.

But from all as we hear I guess they's no dice game going on up on some of the other sections but they's another kind of a game going on up there and so far the Dutchmens has got all the best of it but some of the boys says wait till the Allys gets ready to strike back and they will make them look like a sucker and the best way to do is wait till the other side has wore themself out before you go back at them. Well I told them I have had a lot of experience in big league baseball where they's stragety the same like in war but I never heard none of the big league managers tell their boys to not try and score till the other side had all the runs they was going to get and further and more it looked to me like when the Germans did get wore out they could rest up again in the best hotel in Paris. So Johnny Alcock says oh they won't never get inside of Paris because the military police will stop them at the city limits and ask them for their pass and then where would they be? So I says tell that to Simple Simon and he shut up.

Speaking about Simple Simon what do you think they have got him believeing now. Well they told him Capt. Seeley had sent a patrol over the other night to find out what ailed the Germans that they never showed themself or started nothing against us and the patrol found out that Van Hindenburg had took all the men out of the section opp. us and sent them up to the war and left the trenches opp. us empty so Simon asked him why we didn't go over there and take them then and they told him because our trenches was warmer on acct. of being farther south. I suppose they will be telling him the next thing that Capt. Seeley and Ludendorf married sisters and the 2 of them has agreed to lay off each other.

Well Al I am glad they have got somebody else to pick on besides me and of course they can have a lot more fun with Simon as they's nothing to raw that he won't eat it up wile in my case I was to smart for them and just pretended like I fell for their gags as they would of been disappointed if I hadn't of and as I say somebody has got to furnish amusement in a he—ll hole like this or we would all be squirrel meat.

Your pal,

JACK.

In the Trenchs, June 7.

FRIEND AL: Well Al here is a hot I that they pulled on this Simon bird today and it was all as I could do to help from busting out laughing while they was telling it to him.

Well it seems like he must of been thinking that over what they told him about they not being no Germans in the trenches over opp. to where we are at and it finely downed on him that if they wasn't nobody over there why who was throwing up them flares and rockets every night. So today he said to Brady he says "Didn't you birds tell me them trenches over across the way was empty?" So Brady says yes what of it. So Simon says "Well I notice they's somebody over there at night times or else who throws up them flares as they don't throw themselves up." So Brady says they had probably left a flare thrower over there to do that for them. But Simon says they must of left a lot of flare throwers because the flares come from different places along the line.

So then Alcock cut in and says "Yes but you will notice they don't come from different places at once and the bird that throws them gos from I place to another so as we will think the trenches is full of Germans." So Simon says "They couldn't nobody go from I place to another place as fast as them flares shoots up from different places." So Alcock says "No they couldn't nobody do it if they walked but the man that throws them flares don't walk because he hasn't got only I leg as his other leg was shot off early in the war. But Van Hindenburg is so hard up for men that even if you get a leg shot off as soon as the Dr. mops up the mess and sticks on the court plaster they send the bird back in the war and put him on a job where you don't half to walk. So they stuck this old guy in the motorcycle dept. and now all as he does is ride up and down some quite section like this here all night and stop every so often and throw up a flare to make us think the place is dirty with Germans."

Well Al Simon thought it over a wile and then asked Alcock how a man could ride a motorcycle with only I leg and Alcock says "Why not because you don't half to peddle a motorcycle as they run themself." So Simon says yes but how about it when you want to get off? So Alcock says "What has a man's

legs got to do with him getting off of a motorcycle as long as you have got your head to light on?"

That is what they handed him Al and they hadn't hardly no sooner then got through with that dose when Brady begun on the souvenirs. First he asked him if he had got a hold of any new ones lately and Simon says no he hadn't seen nobody that had any for sale and besides his jack was low so Brady asked him how much did he have and he says about 4 franks. So Brady says "Well you can't expect anybody to come across with anything first class for no such chicken's food as that." So Simon says well even if he had a pocket full of jack he couldn't buy nothing with it when they wasn't nothing to buy. Then Brady asked him if he had saw the German speegle Ted Phillips had picked up and Simon says no so Brady went and got Phillips and after a wile he come back with him and Phillips said he had the speegle in his pocket and he would show it to us if we promised to be carefull and not jar it out of his hands wile he was showing it as he wouldn't have it broke for the world. So Simon stood there with his eyes popping out and Phillips pulled the speegle out of his pocket and it wasn't nothing only a dirty little looking glass that you could pretty near crall through the cracks in it and all the boys remarked what a odd little speegle it was and they hadn't never saw I like it before and etc. and finely Simon couldn't keep his clam shut no longer so he asked Phillips how much he would take for it. Well Phillips says it wasn't for sale as speegles was scarce in Germany on acct. of the war and that was why the Dutchmens always looked like a bum when you took them a prisoner. So Simon asked him what price he would set on it suppose he would sell it and Phillips says about 8 franks. Well Simon got out all his jack and they wasn't only 4 franks and he showed it to Phillips and said if he would take 10 franks for the speegle he would give him 4 franks down and the other 6 franks when he got hold of some jack so Phillips hummed and hawed a wile and finely said all right Simon could have it but he wouldn't never sell it to him only that it kept worrying him so much to carry it in his pocket for the fear he would loose it or break it.

Well Al Phillips has got Simon's last 4 franks and Simon has got Phillips's speegle and I suppose now that the boys sees how soft it is they will be selling him stuff on credit and he will

owe them his next months pay before they get through with him and I suppose the next thing you know they will keep their beard when they shave and sell it to him for German tobacco. Well I would half to be pretty hard up before I went in on some skin game like that and I would just as leave go up to 1 of them cripples that use to spraddle all over the walk along 35 st. after the ball game and stick my heel in their eye and romp off with their days receipts.

Your pal,

JACK.

In the Trenchs, June 11.

FRIEND AL: Well Al it seems like Capt. Seeley is up on his ear because they haven't took our regt. out of here yet because it seems Gen. Pershing told Gen. Foch that he was to help himself to any part of the U. S. army and throw them in where ever they was needed and they's been a bunch of the boys throwed in along the other parts of the front to try and stop the Germans and Capt. Seeley is raveing because they keep us here and don't take us where we can get some actions. Any way I of the lieuts. told some of the boys that if we didn't get took out of here pretty quick Capt. Seeley would start a war of our own on this section and all the officers was sore because we hadn't done nothing or took no prisoners or nothing you might say only make repairs in the wire and etc. Well Al how in the he—ll can we show them anything when they don't never send us over the top or nowheres else but just leave us here moldering you might say but at that I guess we have showed as much life as the birds that's over there opp. us in them other trenchs that hasn't hardly peeped since we come in here and the boys says they are a Saxon regt. that comes from part of Germany where the Kaiser is thought of the same as a gum boil so the Saxons feels kind of friendly towards us and they will leave us alone as long as we leave them alone and visa and versa. So I don't see where Capt. Seeley and them other officers has got a right to pan us for not showing nothing but I don't blame them for wishing they would take us out of here and show us the war and from all as we hear they's plenty of places where we could do some good or at lease as much good as the birds that has been there.

Well Al they have been stringing poor Simon along and today they give him a song and dance about some bird name

Joe in the regt. that was here ahead of us that got a collection of souvenirs that makes Simon's look rotten and they said the guy's pals called him Souvenir Joe on acct. of him having such a fine collection. So Brady says to Simon "All you have got is 5 or 6 articles and the next thing you know they will be taking us out of here and you might maybe never get another chance to pick up any more rare articles so if I was you I would either get busy and get a real collection or throw away them things you have got and forget it."

So Simon says "How can I get any more souvenirs when I haven't no more jack to buy them and besides you birds haven't no more to sell." So Brady says "Souvenir Joe didn't buy his collection but he went out and got them." So Simon asked him where at and Brady told him this here Joe use to crall out in Nobody's Land every night and pick up something and Simon says it was a wonder he didn't get killed. So Brady says "How would he get killed as the trenches over across the way was just as empty when he was here as they are now and Old I Legged Mike and his motorcycle was on the job then to, so Joe would wait till Mike had throwed a few flares on this section and then he would sneak out and get his souvenirs before Mike come back again on his rounds."

Well then Simon asked him where the souvenirs was out there and Brady says they was in the different shell holes because most of Joe's souvenirs was the insides of German shells that had exploded and they was the best kind of souvenirs as they wasn't no chance of them being a fake.

Well Al I had a notion to take Simon to I side and tell him to not pay no tension to these smart alex because the poor crum might go snooping out there some night after the insides of a shell and get the outsides and all and if something like that happened to him I would feel like a murder though I haven't never took no part in making a monkey out of him, but I thought well if the poor cheese don't know no more then that he is better off dead so let him go.

Your pal,

JACK.

In the Trenchs, June 13.

FRIEND AL: Just a line Al as I am to excited to write much but I knew you would want to know the big news. Well Al I have

got a daughter born the 18 of May. How is that for a surprise Al but I guess you won't be no more surprised than I was when the news come as Florrie hadn't gave me no hint and a man can't guess a thing like that when you are in France and the lady in question is back in old Chi. But it sure is wonderful news Al and I only wished I was somewheres where I could celebrate it right but you can't even whistle here or somebody would crown you with a shovle.

Well Al the news come today in a letter from Florrie's sister Marie Allen and she has been down in Texas but I suppose Florrie got her to come up and stay with her though as far as I can see its bad enough to have a baby without haveing that bird in the house to, but they's I consolation we haven't got rm. in the apt. for more than 2 kids and 3 grown ups so when I get home if sweet Marie is still there yet we will either half to get rid of the Swede cook or she, and when it comes to a choice between a ski jumper that will work and a sister that won't why Florrie won't be bothered with no family ties.

Any way I haven't no time to worry about no Allen family now as I am feeling to good and all as I wish is that somebody wins this war dam toot sweet so as I can get home and see this little chick Al and I bet she is as pretty as a picture and she couldn't be nothing else you might say and I have wrote to Florrie to not name her or nothing till I have my say as you turn a woman loose on nameing somebody all alone and they go nuts and look through a seed catalog.

Well old pal I know you would congratulate me if you was here and I am only sorry I can't return the complement and if I was you and Bertha I would adopt 1 of these here Belgium orphans that's lost their parents as they's nothing like it Al haveing a kid or 2 in the house and I bet little Al is tickled to death with his little sister.

Well Al I have told all the boys about it and they have been haveing a lot of fun with me but any way they call me Papa now which is a he—ll of a lot better then Sammy Boy.

Your pal,

JACK.

In the Trenchs, June 14.

FRIEND AL: I am all most to nervous to write Al but anything is better then setting around thinking and besides I want you

to know what has come off so you will know what come off in the case something happens.

Well Al Simple Simon's gone. We don't know if he's dead or alive or what the he—ll and all as we know is that he was here last night and he ain't here today and they hasn't nobody seen or heard of him.

Of course Al that isn't all we know neither as we can just about guess what happened. But I have gave my word to not spill nothing about what the boys pulled on him or god knows what Capt. Seeley would do to them.

Well Al I got up this A. M. feeling fine as I had slept better then any time for a wk. and I dreamt about the little gal back home that ain't never seen her daddy or don't know if she's got I or not but in my dream she knowed me O. K. as I dreamt I had just got home and Florrie wasn't there to meet me as usual but I rung the bell and the ski jumper let me in and I asked her where Florrie was and she said she had went out somewheres with little Al so I was going out and look for them but the Swede says the baby is here if you want to see her and I asked her what baby and she says why your new little baby girl.

So then I heard a baby crying somewheres in the house and I went in the bed rm. and this little mite jumped right up out of bed and all of a sudden she was 3 yrs. old instead of a mo. and she come running to me and hollered daddy. So then I grabbed her up and we begin danceing around but all of a sudden it was I and Florrie that was danceing together and little Al and the little gal was danceing around us and then I woke up Al and found I was still in this he—ll hole but the dream was so happy that I was still feeling good over it yet and besides it looked like the sun had forgot it was in France and was going to shine for a while.

Well pretty soon along come Corp. Evans and called me to I side and asked me what I knew about Simon. So I says what about him. So Corp. Evans says he is missing and they hasn't nobody saw him since last night. So I says I didn't know nothing about him but if anything had happened to him they was a lot of birds in this Co. that ought to pay for it. So Corp. Evans asked me what was I driveing at and I started in to tell him about Alcock and Brady and them kidding this poor bird to death and Corp. Evans says yes he knew all about that and the

best thing to do was to shut up about it as it would get everybody in bad. He says "Wait a couple days any way and maybe he will show up O. K. and then they won't be no sence in spilling all this stuff." So I says all right I would wait a couple days but these birds ought to get theirs if something serious has happened and if he don't show up by that time I won't make no promise to spill all I know. So Corp. Evans says I didn't half to make no promise as he would spill the beans himself if Simon isn't O. K.

Well Al of course all the boys had heard the news by the time I got to talk to them and they's 2 or 3 of them that feels pretty sick over it and no wonder and the bird that feels the sickest is Alcock and here is why. Well it seems like yesterday while I was telling all the boys about the news from home Simon was giveing Alcock a ear full of that junk Brady had been slipping him about Souvenir Joe and Simon asked Alcock if he thought they was still any of them souvenirs worth going after out in them shell holes. So Alcock says of course they must be as some of the holes was made new since we been here. But Alcock told him that if he was him he wouldn't waist no time collecting the insides of German shells as the Germans was so hard up for mettle and etc. now days that the shells they was sending over was about $\frac{1}{2}$ full of cheese and stuff that wouldn't keep. So Alcock says to him "What you ought to go after is a Saxon because you can bet that Souvenir Joe didn't get none and if you would get I all the boys would begin calling you Souvenir Simon instead of Simple Simon and you would make Souvenir Joe look like a dud."

Well Al Simon didn't know a Saxon from a hang nail so he asked Alcock what they looked like and Alcock told him to never mind as he couldn't help from knowing I if he ever seen it so then Simon asked him where they was libel to be and Alcock told him probably over in some of the shell holes near the German trench.

That's what come off yesterday wile I was busy telling everybody about the little gal as you can bet I would of put Simon wise had I of been in on it and now Al he's gone and they don't nobody know what's became of him but they's a lot of us that's got a pretty good idear and as I say they's 2 or 3 feels pretty sick and one a specially. But I guess at that they don't no

one feel no worse then me though they can't nobody say I am to blame for what's happened but still in all I might of interfered because I am the only I of them that has got a heart Al and the only reason Alcock and Brady is so sick now is that they are scared to death of what will happen to them if they get found out. Because their smartness won't get them nothing up in front of the Court Marshall as he has seen to many birds just like them.

Well Al I am on post duty tonight and maybe you don't know what that means. Well old pal its no Elks carnivle at no time and just think what it will be tonight with your ears straining for a cry from out there. And if the cry comes Al they won't only be the I thing to do and I will be the I to do it.

So this may be the last time you will hear from me old pal and I wanted you to know in the case anything come off just how it happened as I won't be here to write it to you afterwards.

All as I can think about now Al is 2 things and I of them is that little gal back home that won't never see her daddy but maybe when she gets 4 or 5 yrs. old she will ask her mother "Why haven't I got a daddy like other little girls?" But maybe she will have I by that time Al. But what I am thinking about the most is that poor 1/2 wit out there and as Brady says he isn't nothing but a Mormon any way and ought never to of got in the army but still and all he is a man and its our duty to fight and die for him if needs to be.

Your pal,

JACK.

In the Hospital, July 20.

FRIEND AL: You will half to excuse this writing as I am propped up in a funny position in bed and its all as I can do to keep the paper steady as my left arm ain't no more use then the Russian front.

Well Al yesterday was the 1st. time they left me set up and I wrote a letter to Florrie and told her I was getting along O. K. as I didn't want she should worry and this time I will try and write to you. I suppose you got the note that the little nurse wrote for me about 2 wks. ago and told you I was getting better. Well old pal the gal that wrote you that little note is some baby and if you could see the kid that wrote you that

little note you would wished you was laying here in my place. No I guess you wouldn't wished that Al as they's nobody that would want to go through what I have been through and they's very few that could stand it like I have and keep on smileing.

Well old pal they thought for a wile that it was Feeney for yrs. truly as they say over here and believe me I was in such pain that I would of been glad to die to get rid of the pain and the Dr. said it was a good thing I was such a game bird and had such a physic or I couldn't of never stood it. But I am not strong enough yet to set this way very long so if I am going to tell you what happened I had better start in.

Well Al this is the 20 of July and that means I have been in here 5 wks. as it was the 14 of June when all this come off. Well Al I can remember writing to you the day of the night it come off and I guess I told you about this bird Simon getting lost that was always after the souvenirs and some of the boys told him they wasn't no Germans over in the other trenches but just a bird name Motorcycle Mike that went up and down the section throwing flares so as we would think they was Germans over there. So they told him if he wanted to go out in Nobody's Land and spear souvenirs it was safe if you went just after Mike had made his rounds so as the snippers wouldn't get you.

Well old pal I was standing there looking out over Nobody's Land that night and I couldn't think of nothing only poor Simon and listening to hear if I couldn't maybe hear him call from somewheres out there and I don't know how long I had been standing there when I heard a kind of a noise like somebody scrunching and at the same time they was a flare throwed up from our side and I seen a figure out there cralling on the ground quite a ways beyond our wire. Well Al I didn't wait to look twice but I called Corp. Evans and told him. So he says who did I think it was and I said it must be Simon. So he says "Well Keefe its up to I of us to go get him." So I said "Well Corp. I guess its my job." So he says "All right Keefe if you feel that way about it." So I says all right and I'll say Al that he give up his claims without a struggle.

Well I started and I was going without my riffle but the Corp. stopped me and says take it along and I says "What for,

do you think I am going to pick Simon up with a bayonet." So he says who told me it was Simon out there. Well Al that's the 1st. time I stopped to think it might maybe be somebody else.

Well Florrie use to say that I couldn't get up in the night for a drink of water without everybody in the bldg. thinking the world serious must of started but I bet I didn't knock over no chairs on this trip. Well Al it took me long enough to get out there as you can bet I wasn't trying for no record and every time they was a noise I had to lay flat and not buge. But I got there Al to where I thought I had saw this bird moveing around but they hadn't no rockets went up since I started and it was like a troop ship and I couldn't make out no figure of a man or nothing else and I was just going to whisper Simon's name when I reached out my hand and touched him. Well Al it wasn't Simon.

Well old pal we had some battle this bird and me and the both of us forgot bayonets and guns and everything else. I would of killed him sure only he got a hold of my left hand between his teeth and I couldn't pry it loose. But believe me Al he took a awful beating with my free hand and I will half to hand it to him for a game bird only what chance did he have? None Al and the battle couldn't only end the 1 way and I was just getting ready to grab his wind pipe and shut off the meter when he left go of my other hand and let out a yell that you could hear all over the great lakes and then all of a sudden it seemed like everybody was takeing a flash light and then the bullets come whizzing from all sides it seemed like and they got me 3 times Al and never pinked this other bird once. Well Al it wasn't till 2 wks. ago that I found out that my opponent was Johnny Alcock.

Just 2 wks. ago yesterday Johnny come in and seen me and told me the whole story and it was the 1st. day they left me see anybody only the Dr. and the little nurse and was the 1st. day Johnny was able to be up and around. How is that Al to put a man in the hospital for 3 wks. without using no gun or knife or nothing on him only I bear fist. Some fist eh Al.

Well it seems like he had been worrying so about Simon that he finely went out there snooping around all by himself looking for him and he was the 1 I seen when that flare went up and of course we each thought the other I was a German and

finely it was him yelling and the rockets going up at the same time that drewed the fire and I got all of it because I was the bird on top.

But listen Al till you hear the funny part of it. Simple Simon the bird that we was both out there looking for him showed up in our trench about a half hr. after we was brought in and he showed up with a Saxon all right but the Saxon was dead. Well Al Simon told them that he had ran into this guy over near their wire and that he was alive when he got him, but Alcock says that Brady said Simon hadn't only been gone 24 hrs. and the Saxon had been gone a he—ll of a lot longer than that.

Well they's no hard feeling between Alcock and I and I guess I more then got even with him for eating out of my hand as they say but Johnny said it was a shame I couldn't of used some of my strength on a German instead of him but any way its all over now and the Dr. says my leg is pretty near O. K. and I can walk on it in a couple wks. but my left arm won't be no use for god knows how long and maybe never and I guess I'm lucky they didn't half to clip it off. So I don't know when I will get out of here or where I will go from here but I guess they's I little party that ain't in no hurry to see me go and I wished you could see her look at me Al and you would say its to bad I am a married man with 2 kids.

Your pal,

JACK.

Somewheres in France, Aug. 16.

FRIEND AL: Well Al I don't suppose this will reach you any sooner then if I took it with me and mailed it when I get home but I haven't nothing to do for a few hrs. so I might as well be writing you the news.

Well old pal I am homewards bound as they say as the war is Feeny as far I am conserved and I am sailing tonight along with a lot of the other boys that's being sent home for good and when I look at some of the rest of them I guess I am lucky to be in as good a shape as I am. I am O. K. only for my arm and wile it won't never be as good as it was I can probably get to use it pretty good in a few months and all as I can say is thank god it is my left arm and not the old souper that use to stand Cobb and them on their head and it will stand them on their head again Al as soon as this war is over and I guess I

won't half to go begging to Comiskey to give me another chance after what I have done as even if I couldn't pitch up a alley I would be a money maker for them just setting on the bench and showing myself after this.

Well we are saying good by to old France and I don't know how the rest of the boys feels but I am not haveing no trouble controling myself and when it comes down to cases Al the shoe is on the other ft. and what I am getting at is that France ought to be the 1 that hates to see us leave as I doubt if they will ever get a bunch of spenders like us over here again.

Well Al it certainly seems quite down here in this old sea port town after what we have been through and it seems like I can still hear them big guns roar and them riffles crack and etc. and I feel like I ought to keep my head down all the wile and keep out of the snippers way and I could all most shut my eyes and imagine I was back there again in that he—ll hole but I know I'm not Al as I don't itch.

Well Al my wounds isn't the only reason I am comeing home but they's another reason and that is that they want some of us poplar idles to help rouse up the public on this here next Liberty Loan and I don't mind it as they have promised to send me home to Chi and I can be with Florrie and the kids. I will do what I can Al though I can't figure where the public would need any rouseing up and they certainly wouldn't if they had of been through what I have been through and maybe some of the other boys to. It takes jack to run a war Al even if us boys don't get none of it or what we do get they either send it home to our wife or take it away from us in a crap game.

Well old pal I left the hospital the day before yesterday and that was the only time I felt like crying since they told me I was going home and it wasn't so much for myself Al but that poor little nurse and you would of felt like crying to if you could of seen the look she give me. Her name is Charlotte Warren and she lives in Minneapolis and expects to go right back there after she is through over here but that don't do me no good as a married man with a couple children has got something better to do besides flirting with a pretty little nurse and besides I won't never pitch ball in Minneapolis as I expect to quit the game when I am about 40.

Well Al some of the boys wants to say their farewells to the

Vin Rouge and the la la las and I will half to close and I will write again as soon as I get home and tell you what the baby gal looks like though they's only the I way she could look and that's good.

Well here is good by to France and good luck to all the boys that's going to stay over here and Simple Simon with the rest of them and I suppose I ought to of got a few souvenirs off him to bring home with me. But I guess at that I will be carrying a souvenir of this war for a long wile Al and its better than any of them foney ones he has got as the I I have got shows I was realy in it and done my bit for old Glory and the U. S. A.

Your pal,

JACK.

Chicago, Aug. 29.

FRIEND AL: Well Al here I am back in old Chi and feeling pretty good only for my arm and my left leg is still stiff yet and I caught a mean cold comeing across the old pond but what is a few little things like that as the main thing is being home.

Well old pal they wasn't nothing happened on the trip across the old pond only it took a whole lot to long and believe me old N. Y. looked good but believe me I wouldn't waist no time in N. Y. only long enough to climb outside a big steak and the waiter had to cut it up for me but even the waiters treated us fine and everywheres we showed up the people was wild about us and cheered and clapped and it sounded like old times when I use to walk out there to warm up.

Well we hit N. Y. in the A. M. and left that night and got here last eve. and I didn't leave Florrie know just when I was comeing as I wanted to supprise her. Well Al I ought to of wired ahead and told her to go easy on my poor old arm because when she opened the door and seen me she give a running hop step and jump and dam near killed me. So then she seen my arm in a sling and cried and cried and she says "Oh my poor boy what have you been through." So I says "Well you have been through something yourself so its 50 50 only I got this from a German."

Well Al little Al was the cutest thing you ever seen and he grabbed me by the good hand and rushed me in to where the little stranger was laying and she was asleep but we broke the rules for once and all and all it was some party and she is

some little gal Al and pretty as a picture and when you can say that for a 3 mos. old its going some as the most of them looks like a French breakfast.

Well I finely happened to think of Sister Marie and I asked where she was at and Florrie says she went back to Texas so I says tough luck and Florrie says I needn't get so gay the 1st. evening home and she says "Any way we have still got a Marie in the house as that is what I call the baby." So I says "Well you can think of her that way but her name ain't going to be that as I don't like the name." So she says what name did I like and I pretended like I was thinking a wile and finely I says what is the matter with Charlotte. Well Al you will half to hand it to the women for detectives as I hadn't no sooner said the name when she says "Oh no you can't come home and name my baby after none of your French nurses." And I hadn't told her nothing about a nurse.

Well any way I says I had met a whole lot more Maries then Charlottes in France and she says had I met any Florries and I said no and that was realy the name I had picked out for the kid. So she says well she didn't like the name herself but it was the only name I could pick out that she wouldn't be suspicious of it so the little gal is named after her mother Al and if she only grows up $\frac{1}{2}$ as pretty as her old lady it won't make no differents if she has got a funny name.

Well Al have you noticed what direction the Dutchmens is making their drive in now? They started going the other way the 18 of July and it was 2 days ahead of that time that our regt. was moved over to the war and now they are running them ragged. Well Al I wished I was there to help but even if I was worth a dam to fight I couldn't very well leave home just now.

Your pal,

JACK.