

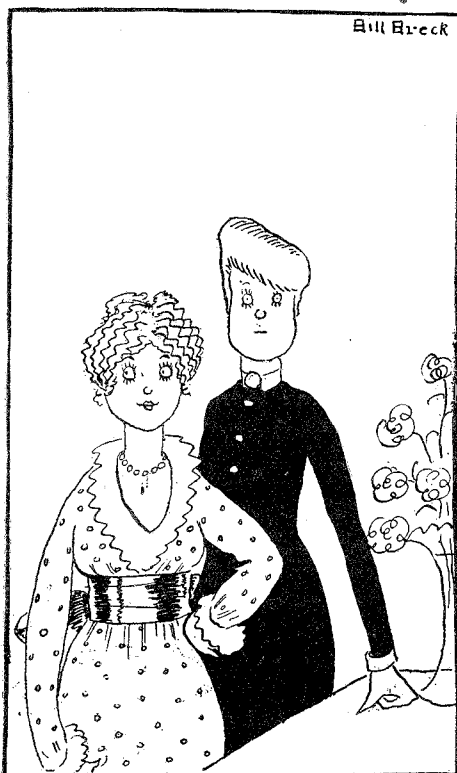
# A Soldier's Letter to His Sweetheart

Dere Mable:

I am bustin into societie up here at the range. This needent make no difference between you and me though. There aint nothing stuck up about me but my hair. Thats all right so long as its good and wet. Last Sunday while I was takin a bath in a little town near here the minister ast me to dinner. Not while I was in the tub, of course, Mable. Just after. He ast Joe Loomis too. He had to really cause he was with me. Hes not a regular minister. Hes got a lot of money and pointed shoes an is down in the mountains for cronik axmuth. Awful highbrow, Mable. Dont know who Ring Lardner is and changes the needle after every record.

The minister has two daughters, both girls and a wife. One of the girls is good looking and the other is more like youd expect. I guess shes a pillow of the church. Joe was ast for her while I amused the good looker. Any one but Joe could have seen that. Not him. He kept buttin in an makin an ass of hisself.

We was ast for dinner at hapast one. Joe thought it would be politer not to run in an eat an run out like it was a canteen so we went a little early. About noon. They played highbrow pieces on the foneygraph. The kind that has only one tune on them an cost so much that everybody has to lissen. Joe dont know nothing about music of course. Right while K. Russo was havin an awful time he says if theyll speed it up a little he like to have a dance.



"Two daughters—both girls."

The minit we sat down to dinner Joe started tellin one of his stories about how he almost got killed one time. They was all waitin for him to shut up sos the minister could say grace before the soup got all cold. Joe thought they were listenen to him. Thats something that aint ever happened to him before. He kept draggin it out and draggin it out. The only thing that finally stopped him was he forgot the point. Then the minister put his nose in his soup and began sayin grace. Joe thought he was talkin to him and kept askin "Hows that and what say" all the time he was prayin.

I aint never goin out with that fello no more. I guess thats safe cause he wont never be ast. All the time durin dinner he kept sayin, "My gawd I hate to make such a hog of myself." Then the minister would look like hed lost some money and my girl would giggle. The ministers wife passed him some stuff she said was real old spider corn cake. Joe said he didnt care how old it was. Since hed been in the army hed got sos he could eat anything. Then he thought a while an says he guessed it must have been a relief to the spiders to get rid of them. Nobody said nothin. Just to show his poyse Joe took his fork out of his mouth and speered four pieces of bread across the table.

He was all for keepin the same plate through dinner and gettin up an helpin. Said he knew what it was like to be in the kitchen on Sunday. They forgot the coffee till dinner was over. They didnt like to waste it I guess bein war times so the ministers wife ast us if wed like to go into the drawin room an have it. Joe said he wasnt much at drawin but My gawd if he sat round makin a hog of hisself any longer theyd have to give it to him in a bed room.

They gave us coffee in egg cups. Seein I wasnt payin for it I didnt guess it was my place to say nothin. Manners. Thats me all over, Mable. We got talkin about one thing and another. I was tellin them about the war and when it was goin to end. Joe was sittin on the sofa with the other daughter pickin the sole of his shoe. I felt sorry for him cause I knew hed be lookin at fotygraphs pretty soon if he didnt buck up.

The ministers wife asked me what I thought of wimmins suffrage. I said I thought it was a good thing but you couldn't tell. Thats the beauty of always keeping read up on these things. If you happen to get outside the army for a little while and meet some intelligent people you can talk on pretty near anything. Then she turned to Joe and ast how he felt. Joe jumped like somebody sprung out at him an says "A little sick to my stummick thanks but thatll be all right as soon as things set a bit."

The good lookin one said she thought our officers was awful cute. I guess she never seen our lieutenant. She said she just could



"They forgot the coffee till dinner was over."

not resist them. I says, quick without thinkin it up "of course, its against the law to resist an officer." That got them all laffin an they forgot Joe for a little while.

Both the daughters sang a duet. Joe says that was the best thing about it. They got through twice as quick. We got laffin so hard that I says I guess wed have to go sos to be in time for mess. Then Joe got awful polite and backed over a rubber plant an says "My gawd excuse me." He wont never be ast again.

Ive been wonderin for a long time, Mable, why the audience officers all wear spurs. They don't ever ride a horse of course. I ast Angus McDonald, the skotch fello, the other day and he says its to keep there feet from slidin off the desk. Aint that a funny custom?

I guess were goin to begin shootin again pretty soon. The Lieutenant says the artillery is goin to have a Brigade problem and the infantry is comin up from camp for it. I guess weel all take a lot more interest in the shootin if theres something worth while to fire at.

yours in spite of better things,

Bill.

P. S. Joe Loomis just got a letter that smelt and what do you suppose Mable? It was from the goodlookin daughter askin him to come over to dinner next Sunday all alone. I guess there not as high brow as I thought.

Bill.

Per E. S.