

Ottumwa, Ia.
Feb. 27-43

Dearest One:-

Well here I am, I got your letter and registered letter with the money this morning. I am glad that you sent the money and sorry too. I could have lived without it but I am more determined than ever now to make myself ready to go back with you when you come home whether you want me to or not. Just as every one tells me, I will be more satisfied in my mind and all to have been with you for even a little while and when I came back then all of life will be different. I would have more peace and satisfaction in my mind regarding your work and place.

I was so happy to read your letter where you said the work would be for 7 more months and then have to set the camps up again and then maybe have to move them back again. It may sound uninteresting to you but it sure made me feel that God was moving to keep you in the states and answer my prayers. It is so wonderful to know that we had God to lead us even when our faith falls to the lowest level and mine has certainly gone down out of sight.

I went to church last night after taking my lesson in the afternoon. I simply walked out on the kids around here last night and let them root but I still had to get supper and wash the dishes before I left as they would have been in the sink for this morning and the breakfast dishes are still there right now. Betty is just around under my feet all the time until I can't do anything and she don't do anything but take care of the baby and I refuse even to hold her. Betty has gone to town again to meet Jack at his noon hour and here I am planted with the baby and I can't accomplish the work I had planned for today which was tearing off the paper in the dining room and getting it ready to paper Monday. I will have to do a washing before the day is over, twice now this week and then go to town and to Nora's and get my new Spencer. My other dress came yesterday and I will have the two to hem now if I can ever see my way clear to get at it. Mrs. Stoltz was well pleased with my lesson and said that I deserved three lessons a week but how can it ever come to pass is more than I know and can figure out from more than one angle. She gave me the song "Come Sweet Death" and said that the way I sang it was just perfect but she don't know how that very song applied to my feelings.

When I went to church last night Hudge was there in his uniform and it just kills me to see any of the others home and you not here. That is one of the things which keeps me away from church as much as anything I think. Carol told me that Lotus would be coming home in about five weeks or so and when he goes back he is very likely to go into active sea duty out on a boat as he is not getting any opening for school and Hudge is going to have a hard fight to get into school too as there is only two or three available for openings at this time and he may be sent out if something doesn't open up for him when he goes back, so I guess you and I have something to shout about after all haven't we? The Lord has smiled on us more than we can ever realize. I feel ashamed at my lack of faith and courage but the hurt is so deep that many are the days that I think I can't live thro them and nights so long and lonely that death would be sweet to look forward to. I have never realized how sweet death could be and how readily welcomed so I think I can make a great success of my song. I went to church to get something last night and didn't get a thing but a lot of kid stuff, the young people of Bloomfield had about an hours entertainment in singing and playing duets on the coronet and clarinet and all that junk and it was all this small town stuff of singing thro their noses and hill billy type so it bored me to the bone and you know what I think of Leo Simmons preaching and he talked for a few minutes. Then we were to have choir practice afterwards and Welsons wanted Deb to come out and get the case while they were practicing and when I phoned Betty, no answer, she was curled up in bed asleep and so I had to pile in the truck and come out with Deb and Bowers.

She never even heard us come in and ram around and take out the case or anything and never knew when I went to bed, so you see, it is the silly care free young life and I cannot depend on that. They are going to look for another place because they will have to leave as I told them I was going back with you or follow you very soon after. So I missed out in something good at church and the choir practice too, but I guess I can hold my own on that without the practice. They would have floped entirely last Sunday night if I hadn't have been for me to lead out in a song which was the first time for them to use it., altho they had practiced the Fri. night before, you know how they are. Well they are using one again Sun which is about their first attempt and as I heard them saying last when I left last night, we can't sing that because we don't know it, they never think that they could learn a song and I guess they must be right for they never do. I wish I was where I could help out with things like you said Floy did with the singing down there. If we drive back we will take the Vibraharp and show them how to do things won't we?. That is why I want to keep on with my lessons so that you and I can do some work like that when this affair is over and peace settles down again.

I must tell you that Helen Bensmiller got a call from Bennie long distance from New York. he is waiting to be shipped at any moment and she didn't know whether she would make it there in time to see him or not but she did and he met her train and this week end may get it off to spend with her but her railroad fare was only \$48.00 round trip including tax and traveling insurance of 25¢ a day for ten days. This takes care of doctors expense and accident or care in a hospital if the train should have a wreck, etc. Wasn't that cheap, I couldn't imagine the fare being so reasonable. I didn't want you to send your money home, I wasn't asking for it but I will keep it and if an emergency comes up it will be here but when I get the insurance money I am going to get my clothes all rigged out for the trip to the south whether you want me to come or not. So there you are going to have to make up your mind to that torture whether you want to or not.

You are going to get in on all of the revival are you? Well that will be fine. I know you are enjoying it. Don't worry about your tithe money reaching the proper place as it always have and I won't betray your trust in me no matter what my need would be for the money for God comes first and then he is sure to look after me if I look to him first, won't he? I am enclosing your sugar card so that you can have your shoes. The only thing I used your card for was sugar and coffee. They are cutting us down to five pounds of sugar for eleven weeks the next time. I am also going to send the camera today if the office is open, if not I will have to wait and then send it Monday morning with Chisman. So be on the look out for it.

No don't you dare to refuse your leave no matter where you are and I am afraid for you to send this money home for fear you might have need of it to come on, shall I send it back? at least \$50.00 of it? I sure am glad and shout the victory if you have to tear camps down for six months more and then have to set them up again for the same time or even longer in the states and then after the war I will come down and help you move them back so that you can get home sooner to stay. How's that?

Well the first of the week I will pitch in again on the house as I want it all shaped up fine and dandy for you when you come and we are going to have Welshon's and Jerry over for dinner and any of the other folks to come in that you want and just go every minute and have a grand time so I don't want a job to fall my way before you have come and I have this work around the house done. I guess the Lord knew what was best when he finished my job up there for me but it surely made me feel mighty low to think that I was a dead expense on your hands, that is not the way I want it to be.

over.

Well, the P.O. will be open until six so I am going to pack your camera and get it off to you today, so you can look for it the first part of the week. So now I must get busy and try to accomplish something altho nothing has been done today. I will have to get busy now and wash up to go to Nora's for my fitting and get my new Spencer and bring it home. I expect I will be up there for supper as I am to go about 4:30 or 5. So here is where I leave you for this time and in the morning I am going to church clothes or no clothes and the young things around here are going to have to fend for themselves. I have took just about all of this that I can take, I missed church on account of cold weather and work but I'll be darned if I am going to miss it on account of these kids now that the weather is mild again, so I will be with you in church in the morning.

Write soon again and tell me all the news about YOURSELF and what you have done, are doing and intend to do. Mrs. Wolland called and Mrs. Day and both sent their regards and love to you. So long for now and I will be looking for your next letter Monday. I hope there will be more sunshine in my life before then and you start thinking fast on my coming down with you because you are going to have to take that medicine even if it does taste mighty bitter to you. Too bad isn't it?

Here I go to do the dishes, eat a bite and get ready to go to Nora's. So long, and God bless you and keep you well and safe and bring you safe home to Bobby and me.

*Love
mother*

Today is dear old Mother's Birthday, 81 yrs old

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Thurs. Eve.
25th-43

Dear Son:-

I am going to try to get a little written this evening while there is a breathing spell. I finished up the walls and ceiling of the living room and the ceiling of the dining room today and that is all that I got done with all the confusion around here. My nerves are a wreck. I don't know what I am to do and how I can stand it until I get these kids out of here. I have told them that I would be going back with you or following you soon after for a visit down there and that I am going to close the house. I hope that this works as I would like to do that thing but of course if you don't want me that is another matter. But I have to do something before I break down entirely.

That kid has just whined and bawled all day long until I am so nervous like I was last night that I can't sleep after I go to bed. I didn't get to sleep until one o'clock last night and I am so tired that I don't know where I am.

I called Welshon's today to come and get this case for his dogs or I was going to call the 2nd hand man because he wants it since I mentioned it to him and now I want him to take it because I need the room and I want to get to papering the dining room tomorrow if the weather will permit. It is cold and windy this evening and the ton of coal came and it sure looked like a very small ton to me. I think I will have to change coal men.

I didn't get any letter from you today, what was the matter? Have you heard anything more about the leave or won't you hear anything until you just receive it? Well, when you get it hop the first train and get here as soon as you can. Welshon's said that they were praying that it would be granted to you and that you could come by convention time. I hope it turns out that way, you would enjoy it.

I suppose that spring is coming down there by now and that the birds and frogs are all coming out. I am so tired of this winter that I don't care if I never see another one. It has been terrible and cold, so much snow and ice all winter long, and so everlasting cold with it.

I want to go to church tomorrow night but I don't know what will turn up between now and then, It seems like these people are getting more and more helpless as the days go by instead of getting acquainted with the place and helping to care for it. I have to do everything even to getting the meals. She don't eat if she has to get a meal, no wonder she is anemic. The baby is so spoiled to being entertained that she can't do a thing without her bawling to be held or something. I told Welshon's that I was going to church tomorrow night and he is going to have Delbert come out with the truck and get the bookcase thing that we have had around here. You know which one.

The kid's bed came today and they set it up this eveing and I had to carry the packing paper and boxes to the basement and dispose of them, they didn't seem to think anything about cleaning it up themselves. I can't stand up to that you know. I want to get some sleep tonight so that I can wash woodwork and get around to getting the rugs down and things done before convention time and before you get here. I want our time all to ourselves so that is the reason that I am not very anxious for a job at present. I have my application in at a couple of places.

You said to send the camera but what is the use to send it when the films are impossible to get. I can't get but one roll in this town by trying all of the places that have them. It is one of the sizes that they are almost eliminated and the most you can get at one purchase is one roll and you are lucky to catch the time to get that one. I couldn't have gotten this one that I have if Mrs. Gillian hadn't put it aside for me.

I want to do another washing when the day is nice again and get the curtains clean. They are just black from the furnace smoke and dirt. I cleaned out the furnace yesterday and nearly had a fatality with that fine dust. I inhaled more of it than I could take and nearly stopped my breathing altogether, I had to get out of doors and cough and try to get my breath. I guess it wouldn't have made much difference if I hadn't got it again anyway. Today my left lung which has been bothering me for some time has been very sore. There is and has been a spot on it for sometime that is very very sore at spells and then my heart gave me such a struggle last night that I could hardly sleep. I broke out in cold sweats and just seem to swim in water until morning and then I have been sweating on my hands all day long just like the heat of summer.

Betty is wanting me to go to a Dr. but what is the use. I know what he will say and why pay him the money for what I know ails me and if I can get over it without him all right and if I can't all right. I have come to the place where I see it don't make any difference to anyone so let the day come when it will. I should worry.

I don't know any news, just the same old thing, get up and work and go to bed and lay there and not sleep before morning and then get up and work again with this racket going on all the time until I am nearly nuts. I know you don't care to hear it and while you are having such a good time you won't miss my letters anyhow or you would write more regular, so I will get some post cards to drop to you once in a while to let you know whether I am still among the living or not and how the weather is up here. Maybe if I can get out to church sometime I can find some kind of news if it is nothing more than gossip to send you.

I am waiting for my good dress to come from Lane Bryant. I think it is the last that I will try to send for. I will just have to take the time and money and go to Des Moines to get the things I need like dresses up there. When you order from the catalogs any more you never know what you will get or whether you get it at all or not, just a check back and it is pretty hard to dress up in them and get by with it, they may blow off in a hard wind.

Hold on to your money now, I really mean it, I am not kidding because it looks serious. Have it ready and on hand for when your leave comes so that you will not miss an hour in getting started. We will try to have a good time every minute when you get here.

I don't think the fellows will say that you get a book any more when they see these last few letters. If things keep on like they are there will be less and less because there will be less and less to do the writing unless you can keep the encouraging letters from the church sisters coming to you. I am just down as far as I can get without going off the deep end and I mean it. I hope I hear from you for a change tomorrow and also I hope that my dress comes or it is going to be a barrell for me. I have the spring coat to get and I think I will go to the Utica in Des Moines when that time comes. Well I guess I will close for Betty has come in and it is chatter, chatter, chatter until you can't write or think. Jack had to go back to the base tonight. He won't be home until Sat. night.

3 It won't be so long until practically all the fellows will have to stay out there all the time and then I don't know whether Betty will stay in Ottumwa or not. The group of flying cadets come in about two weeks from now and then business will begin in earnest out at the base for real flying training. There hasn't been much flying done so far, just the experienced fliers taking the planes in and out of town. I don't hear anything about Pat Avery any more or any of the relation. They are satisfied now I geuss. Well it suits me O.K. if I never see them again.

Now I must go down and see about the fire for night as it is going to be plenty cold again. Oh, how I wish this was over, it is wearing me out physically and financially both, so much fuel all the time. I am so all in tonight, in fact I am both day and night. I hope going to church makes me feel better tomorrow night and I have my head set that I am going.

The living room looks so nice and clean since I cleaned the ceiling and side walls. How I wish the mouldings were on. Well I must roll in and be ready to get up when daylight comes in the morning so that I can get a lot of cleaning done. Everything is just black.

Well, write soon and remember that I enjoy hearing from you and don't give all your time to those southern Cloys. You mother would like to have a little in your life for I feel very lonesome and neglected. Let me hear how the leave is coming along, and would you care to have me go back with you for a little while, Bobby and Me? Well I must get to work, the old slave and janetress must get to work now and fix things for the night. that is your young people for you now a days. Not worth a tinker's dam.

I sure would like to see you, maybe you could help me out of my feelings and the muddle of the whole thing, if I don't get out soon it is going to be too bad. Here's hoping. Write soon.

Love
mother