

ladies, as each had the letter uppermost in her mind. Miss Miller's motion, so numerous seconded, was put by the president and carried with a unanimity seldom seen in a gathering of this kind.

The secretary was instructed by the president to read the letter, but before she could do so, Clara Vaughn jumped to her feet and excitedly said—

"No you don't, Belle Johnston. Amy is to read the letter; that was the agreement."

"Very well," said the president, "I will read it."

Receiving the letter from the secretary, Amy read:

CAMP MISERABLE, NEAR SLOUGH OF DESPOND,
December 14, 1862.

MISS CLARA VAUGHN,
Wapakoneta, Ohio.

My Dear Miss Vaughn:—I know you will pardon a lonely soldier for presuming to write you upon the flimsy pretext of finding your address, written on a tiny card, in tiny letters, and, I will venture the assertion, with the sweetest and tiniest hand in the Buckeye state. You must forgive my carelessness, when I tell you that I enjoyed the comforts of those—well, I must say it, and run the risk of shocking your modesty—beautiful socks one whole day before I found your card. The truth is, I was so anxious to wear something made by the hands of some fair lady, that as soon as I became the happy possessor of the aforementioned socks, I removed the gunboats from my feet, and with tears of joy swimming in my eyes, proceeded to encase my feet. But, horror of horrors! they would not go on. I pulled, tugged and—prayed; but it was of no use; they resisted my most earnest endeavors. They were several sizes too small. After resting a while, I got one of the boys, who had some knowledge of civil engineering, and we made a practical survey of the socks, then of my feet.

"It's no use, Jack," said my friend, "you can't get a number six sock over a number twelve foot."

My friend left me in my trouble. How awfully unsympathetic these fellows get after they have been in the army a while! I sat down on a log and contemplated the socks, those beautiful blue woolen socks, which you had knit with your little fingers. I can, in fancy, see you now, with your deft little hands, and the blue yarn wrapped around your fingers, making music with your knitting needles as you round off the toe of the last sock, a sigh of relief escaping you as the last stitch is dropped from the needle.

I remained sitting upon the log for some time, trying to work out some way to overcome the dilemma in which I found myself. At length, a happy thought came to me, and I acted upon it at once. I would exchange socks with one of the boys. I leaped from the log, and with my blue treasures in my hands, started for the quarters to find some one with a pair of blue—none but blue would suit—socks large enough to fit my feet; but before I could ask the question, nearly every man in the company yelled, "Jack, have you a pair of large socks to exchange for a small pair?" I tried every man I met, but it was no go. They were all in the same fix I was. Do you know, I felt like going to the pond—the boys call it the "Slough of Despond,"—casting myself in, and lying there until the water got deep enough to drown me. But thinking the matter over, I changed my mind, and here I am writing to my kind benefactress. Finally another thought struck me—it didn't hurt very much. I said not a word to my messmates, but quickly grabbed up my socks, and finding an axe, went to the woods, where I selected a tree suitable to my purpose and soon had it lying on

the ground. Cutting off a part of the trunk of the tree, about two feet in length, I hewed it roughly into the shape of a foot—my foot. After hewing and trying, I finally succeeded in getting the block into proper shape to stretch the socks over, which I did with the aid of a set of blocks and tackle. Once on the models, I let them remain over night, so that they might become thoroughly set to the shape. I removed them from the blocks the next morning, and oh, raptures of bliss! I was able to get them on my feet. True, there was not much of the upper part of the sock left, but enough to swear by. The world was all sunshine once more. I wore the socks all that day, not minding the little matter that my toe was being hurt; but at night I turned the one that was giving me the trouble wrong side out, thinking that, perhaps, in your haste to send them to me, you had left a ball of yarn in one of them. But happy was I when I picked up the tiny card which bore your name and address, and I trust you will overlook my carelessness when you read this and learn of my trouble in putting your gift into practical use.

I can not close this without expressing my warmest thanks to the dear young ladies who are doing so much to cheer the hearts of the soldiers, and remind them of the dear homes they left far to the northward. May God bless you, individually and collectively, is the prayer of
PRIVATE JACK CRAIG.

P. S.—I dreamed last night I held in mine the little hand that knit the socks.
J. C.

Oh, yes! Knit all the socks at least four sizes larger. All the boys have large feet—in fact, mine are the smallest in the company. Now, if you don't answer this, I will desert and come to see you; and when I am caught, I will be shot, and I know you would not like to hear of that misfortune overtaking me. Therefore, I give you fair warning, that you may know what will follow should you not answer this letter at once.

CRAIG.

After the letter was finished, Clara rose to her feet and asked: "Am I to answer the letter?"

"Yes," cried several of the girls at once.

"Silence!" called the president, at the same time bringing down upon the table a potato masher, which had been borrowed from Mrs. Harrington's kitchen to serve as a gavel, with such force as to break the handle, rendering it useless for the evening.

"You'll ketch it, Amy Harrington, fer breakin' your mother's tater masher," said the irrepressible Melissa Updyke.

As soon as order was once more restored, the president said: "What is your wish regarding the letter?"

"Lay hit under the table," said Miss Updyke, whose knowledge of parliamentary usage was somewhat vague.

"I move," said Miss Brattain, "Miss Vaughn be instructed to reply to the communication."

"Hit hain't a communication; hit's a letter," said Miss Updyke, wishing to correct the last speaker.

"I second Miss Brattain's motion," said Miss Childs.

The motion was put and carried with but one no, Miss Updyke casting a negative vote, she being on bad terms with Clara.