

The Library of America • Story of the Week

From *Theodore Roosevelt: Letters & Speeches*

(Library of America, 2004), pages 737–42.

Originally published in Volume VIII of *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt* (1954).

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“A Very Sad Thing”

THEODORE ROOSEVELT

“THEIR TEMPER AND QUALITY”

To King George V

Oyster Bay, July 22, 1918

Your Majesty,

It was very kind and thoughtful of Her Majesty the Queen, and you, Sir, to cable us about the death of our son Quentin, and Mrs. Roosevelt and I thank you both, with all our hearts. Of his three brothers Ted, who is a Major of Infantry, has been gassed once and is now in hospital with a bullet through his leg; Archie, a Captain of Infantry, has been badly wounded by a shell; both were cited for gallantry, in orders; Kermit has been Captain of an armored machine gun motor battery with your army in Mesopotamia, has been given the Military Cross, and is now with our army under Pershing. Unlike most of their fellow-countrymen they had prepared in advance! They sailed from our shores over a year ago; their mother and I knew their temper and quality; and we did not expect to see all of them come back.

If you are in touch with your brother-in-law, King Haakon, pray present H.M. my regards. I have not written him recently because I have known how very much he has had to cause him anxiety.

If it be true that the bolshevists have executed the Czar, I should think it would give food for reflection to the Kaiser. Until I saw the revelations by that big German steel manufacturer, Thyssen, and by Lichnowsky, I thought that the Kaiser had merely been swept along by the Junker-capitalistic-militaristic-beaurocratic party; but I fear that he was in reality one of the leaders in the movement that has plunged the civilized world into the abyss. At least America is beginning to render some real help to the Allies, and unless Russia be-

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has even worse than so far she has behaved the strain can not but tell on Germany; but I always fear lest we find the Germans using Russian man power in their army. I am urging our people over here to prepare *now* for putting in France next year an American army bigger than the German army; if so, we can surely finish the war in '19, and may finish it this year.

I hope all your family are well.

I am, Sir, with great regard, *very faithfully yours*

“A VERY SAD THING”

To Georges Clemenceau

Oyster Bay, July 25, 1918

My dear M. Clemenceau:

I have received many messages from rulers of nations and leaders of peoples; but among these there is none I have valued quite as much as yours, because I have a peculiar admiration for you and feel that you have played a greater part than any man not a soldier has played, and a greater part than any soldier, except one or two, has played in this great world war. It is a very sad thing to see the young die when the old who are doing nothing, as I am doing nothing, are left alive. Therefore it is very bitter to me that I was not allowed to face the danger with my sons. But whatever may be their fate, I am glad and proud that my sons have done their part in this mighty war against despotism and barbarism. Of my four boys Quentin, as you know, has been killed, and two of the other three wounded and all three of these have been decorated for gallantry and efficiency in action.

Thank Heaven, it begins to look as if at last Germany had spent her strength, and I thank Heaven also that we now have at least a few hundred thousand Americans to fight beside the French. *Faithfully yours*

PEACE TERMS

To James Bryce

Dark Harbor, Maine, August 7, 1918

Dear Bryce,

I thank you for your kind letter of sympathy; and I value all you say about my boys, and especially about gallant Quentin who has paid with his life for the faith that was in him. He died just as your nephew, just as young Gladstone, just as so many, many other gallant young fellows have died. It is very dreadful that the young should die and the old be left, especially when the young are those who above all others should be the leaders of the next generation. But they have died with high honor, and not in vain; for it is they, and those like them, who have saved the soul of the world. For the world would have had no soul if the efficient swinishness of Germany had triumphed.

My two wounded sons will both recover. My four boys have "proved their truth by their endeavor," have'n't they?

I am greatly pleased by what you say as to the valor of our troops. I am proud beyond measure that at last we really have a fair sized army in the fighting line.

I am steadily preaching that we ought to make our army in France by next spring larger than the combined armies of England and France.

I absolutely agree with what you say about peace. I do not myself think there will be need of so much wisdom as firmness in settling the terms of peace. The principles are in outline simple enough. I have been preaching them here! England and Japan must keep the Colonies they have won, France receive back Alsace-Lorraine, Belgium be restored and indemnified — Italia irredenta must go to Italy, down to Istria. Roumanian Hungary must go to Hungary. The Czecho-Slovak, Polish and Jugo Slav commonwealths must be created as entirely independent; the latter with access to the Adriatic. Albania should be a cantonal state under the protection of France, England and perhaps the United States; the Turk should be driven from Europe, Armenia made independent under a guarantee of the Allies; the Jews given Palestine; the

Syrian Christians protected; the Arabs made independent. The separate nationalities of broken-up Russia should be made commonwealths absolutely free from German dominion and probably independent; the Poles, Slavs of Siberia and Danes of North Sleswig should all be freed from the German yoke.
Faithfully yours

“HER HEART WILL ACHE FOR QUENTIN”

To Belle Willard Roosevelt

Dark Harbor, Maine, August 11, 1918

Darling Belle,

I have written you many times, sometimes like this, direct to the Embassy at Madrid, sometimes, as I am going to do in two or three days, through Mr. Love. If you receive either of these letters (for I shall make the same request in both) will you let me know which address to use hereafter?

Your delightful letter to Mother about your trip with Kermit and blessed Willard from Rome to Madrid has just come. It was even more interesting than Kermit's on the same subject. Aunt Emily also wrote us a most enthusiastic letter about you, and the baby, whom she worships. She immensely admires Kermit, but, quite properly, it is *you* to whom her heart especially goes out. I could not overstate, dearest Belle, how very deeply Mother and I appreciate all that your thoughtfulness and sweetness have meant to and have done for Aunt Emily.

Well, Kermit's extraordinary combination of gentleness, of dauntless courage and energy, and of possession of that elusive but most real quality of being extremely interested in matters and interesting to people, has never been more evident than at the present time; and you, darling girl, have shown that the very sweetest traits of the old-style lovely girl can be joined with the finest heroism and capacity. But I am exactly as proud of the wives of my sons, and of Ethel, as I am of my boys and of Dick.

It is no use pretending that Quentin's death is not very

terrible. It is most so for poor Flora who is staying here with Ethel, as we are. But it is almost as hard for Mother. They have both been very brave. There is nothing to comfort Flora at the moment; but she is young; I most earnestly hope that time will be very merciful to her, and that in a few years she will keep Quentin only as a loving memory of her golden youth, as the lover of her golden dawn, and that she will find happiness with another good and fine man. But of course it would be all wrong for me to tell her this *now*. As for Mother, her heart will ache for Quentin until she dies. I would not for all the world have had him fail fearlessly to do his duty, and to tread his allotted path, high of heart, even altho it led to the gates of death. But it is useless for me to pretend that it is not very bitter to see that good, gallant, tender-hearted boy, leave life at its crest, when it held Flora, and such happiness, and certainly an honorable and perhaps a distinguished career.

Evidently Archie is crippled, at least for many months to come, and I wish he would come home. Hitherto the rascal has refused. I would'n't suggest it if he could render any service with the army, but to spend months of pain and idleness in Paris, instead of at least being with his wife and baby and his mother does'n't seem worth while.

Ted has apparently recovered from the gassing, and will soon recover from the bullet wounds in his leg; I am so glad he is with Eleanor.

I do'n't yet know just what Kermit is doing, for I have had no letter from him since he got to France.

Your birthday cable to Mother has just come; it was dear of you to remember.

Kim and Willard must be the most adorable small persons! We have been greatly comforted by Richard and little Edie; the former loves Mother, and the latter lets me love her! (There is a somewhat nice distinction between the two). In time of trouble the unconsciousness of children is often a great comfort.

Tell your father how deeply we appreciated the trouble he took, and the information he got for us from Germany; and give our love to all your dear family. *Ever affectionately yours*
Kermit's father