

**THE PEAK OF THE LOAD: THE
WAITING MONTHS ON THE
HILLTOP FROM THE ENTRANCE OF
THE STARS AND STRIPES TO THE
SECOND VICTORY ON THE MARNE**

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The peak of the load: the waiting months on the hilltop from the entrance of the Stars and stripes to the second victory on the Marne by Mildred Aldrich

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MILDRED ALDRICH

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THE PEAK OF THE LOAD

THE FRENCH CENSOR ALLOWED
THE MANUSCRIPT OF THIS BOOK
TO PASS, HAVING ALREADY PER-
MITTED THE PASSAGE OF THE
LETTERS WHICH COMPOSE IT, BUT,
IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PRES-
ENT REGULATIONS REGARDING
PHOTOGRAPHS, THE PHOTOGRAPHIC
ILLUSTRATIONS WHICH WERE TO
ACCOMPANY THE MANUSCRIPT
WERE NOT ALLOWED TO
LEAVE FRANCE

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THE PEAK OF THE LOAD

THE WAITING MONTHS ON THE HILLTOP
FROM THE ENTRANCE OF THE STARS
AND STRIPES TO THE SECOND
VICTORY ON THE MARNE

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BY

MILDRED ALDRICH

AUTHOR OF "A HILLTOP ON THE MARNE," "TOLD IN A
FRENCH GARDEN, AUGUST, 1914," "ON THE
EDGE OF THE WAR ZONE"

TORONTO
THE MUSSON BOOK COMPANY
LIMITED

1918



TO THE BOYS OF THE

★ AMEX ★

WHO HAVE GONE OVER THE HILLTOP
INTO THE FIGHTING LINE

THE PEAK OF THE LOAD

THE PEAK OF THE LOAD

I

Dear Old Girl:

April 20, 1917

I HAVE had a rather busy two weeks, during which, for many reasons, I have not felt in the spirit to sit down and write you the long letter I know you expect in response to your great epistolary cry of triumph after the Declaration of War.

Personally, after the uplift the decision gave me, came a total collapse and I had some pretty black days. I had to fight against the fear that we were too late, and the conviction that, if we were really to do our part at the front, the war was still to last not one year, but years. An army cannot be created in a day, and the best will in the world, and all the pluck I know our lads to have, will not make them, inside of at least a year, into a fighting army fit to stand against the military science of Germany, and do anything more serviceable than die like heroes.

Besides, no matter from what point of view one looks at the case, it does make a difference to think that *our* boys are coming over here to go into this holocaust.

THE PEAK OF THE LOAD

You must know that, even among officers in the army, who welcome with enthusiasm the entrance of the States into the ranks of the Allies, there are plenty who are still optimistic about the war's duration, and who smile, and say: "Don't fret. Your boys will march in the triumphal procession. The generous aid the States have given us earns them that right, but they cannot get ready to fire their guns in time to do much at the front."

I hope you'll take it in the right spirit when I say that I don't want it to end like that, and I am sure it won't. Personally I think the end is a long way off, and I can't tell you how our boys are needed. Besides, put it at the fact that Fate is to take a proportionate toll from our army—the other nations will have had nearly four years, if not quite four, before our losses begin.

Our men are going to leave their women and children in safety, in a land that can never know the horrors of invasion. I don't want to dwell on that idea, but it is a comfort all the same.

You say in your last that our boys are coming across the ocean "to die in a foreign land." Yes, I know. But they are coming to a country where they are already loved. Wonderful preparations are going to be made to care for them, and I do believe the United States, as a government and as a people, is going to make the great sacrifice