

**LETTERS OF OSWIN  
CREIGHTON,  
C.F., 1883-1918**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649133284

Letters of Oswin Creighton, C.F., 1883-1918 by Louise Creighton

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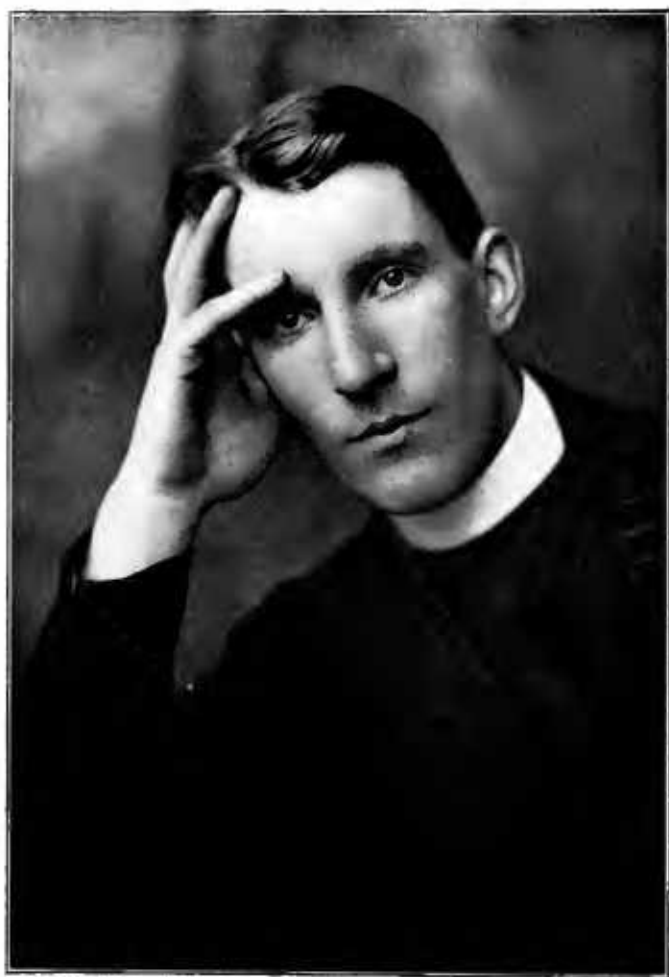
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**LOUISE CREIGHTON**

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*Photo : G. C. Beresford.*

OSWIN CREIGHTON, 1910.

LETTERS OF  
OSWIN CREIGHTON, C.F.

1883-1918

EDITED BY HIS MOTHER  
LOUISE CREIGHTON

"He that loseth his life for My sake shall find it."

*WITH SEVEN ILLUSTRATIONS*

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.  
39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON  
FOURTH AVENUE & 30th STREET, NEW YORK  
BOMBAY, CALCUTTA, AND MADRAS

1920

"We'll teach the men," he said, "to laugh at Death;"  
Yet not as one who counted not the cost,  
Or reckon'd nothing-worth the fleeting breath,  
Or play'd with chance and mock'd at what was lost :

Rather his eager spirit look'd beyond,  
And, grappling onward to the coming task,  
Brook'd no delay, whate'er his hand had found;  
Should it be here or there, he did not ask.

Therefore when death's swift hour upon him came,  
He smiled his welcome, like a captive free  
From earthly doubts and trammelings; and we,  
No lower let us learn to fix our aim,  
To smile at suffering while our task we claim,  
And lose the present in the thing to be.

C. B.

## INTRODUCTION

I HAVE put together these selections from Oswin Creighton's many letters, in the hope that those who came across him during some part of his full and varied life may be glad to know more about one who, whatever they may have thought of him, must at least have attracted their attention. It has seemed best not to attempt a regular memoir, but to let him disclose himself in his own words. He liked to pour out in his letters the thoughts and ideas which crowded his active mind. But he said again and again that what he wrote must not be taken as considered opinions, that very likely in a few days or even hours, he would think quite differently. So his letters must not be thought to contain carefully weighed expressions of opinion. They express the mood and thought of the moment, but at the same time they reveal the man who wrote them. They show an eager soul, a fearless seeker after truth, frank, impulsive, spontaneous, longing to give affection, delighting in the affection he received.

The circumstances of his life, as well as his own inquiring and critical disposition, made it impossible for him to be content with accepted opinions or conventional methods of thought and action. Life, whether in a Notting Dale slum, on the Canadian prairie, or on the bloodstained battlefields of Gallipoli and France, brought to him an endless series of questionings and problems. These he always stated fearlessly, for he was absolutely sincere. He did not live to work out the solution of his problems. His letters must remain as an unfinished story. But his statement of the questionings forced upon him in the midst of experiences, searching, testing, often terrible, may help others to go on working to find the answer. It is sometimes even more illuminating to ask than to answer a question. Ever a learner, a truth-seeker himself, he never wanted to impose his opinion on others, only to help them to think out things for themselves. Those who read are



likely to differ from him often, but as they differ they will be compelled to think, and that was to him the supreme necessity.

In making selections from the vast mass of his correspondence I have been guided by the desire to make him reveal himself. Descriptions and accounts of travelling experiences have for the most part been omitted, and of necessity also his many amusing character sketches of the people he met. These were never malicious. He loved men and women, and his interest in them was unlimited. I have not thought it necessary to indicate where passages of the letters are omitted, and have tried to make them tell the story of his life in its main outlines. Where there is no other indication the letters are addressed to me. I have made no attempt to collect letters from friends. Few people, especially few young men, keep letters, and Oswin's letters to his family suffice to reveal the manner of man he was. There has been no need to conceal anything. He had nothing to hide, and as he was, so he shows himself in these letters. But no written word can convey the sense of boundless energy, of intense vitality that his presence brought with it, nor the depth of his powers of affection.

LOUISE CREIGHTON.

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