

**LETTERS
TO HIS WIFE**

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Letters to his wife by R. E. Vernède

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R. E. VERNÈDE

**LETTERS
TO HIS WIFE**

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BY THE SAME AUTHOR

WAR POEMS

NOVELS

THE PURSUIT OF MR FAVIEL

MERIEL OF THE MOORS

THE JUDGMENT OF ILLINGBOROUGH

THE JUNE LADY

BOOKS OF TRAVEL

AN IGNORANT IN INDIA

THE FAIR DOMINION

LETTERS TO HIS WIFE

BY
R. E. VERNÈDE

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INTRODUCTION

My first idea in printing my husband's letters was to have them, in a complete and more convenient form, for private circulation among those few intimate friends and relations to whom I had sent copies of each letter as it arrived. During the last few weeks, however, I have been asked by so many people to have his letters published, that I have at last decided to let them appear as they now do. But I do this very hesitatingly. To those who knew my husband, and who know his writings, no apology is needed. To others I feel I should like to give some explanation. The letters were written under very great difficulties. How great, I think, few people can realise without having known the man.

He was French by descent, his branch of the Vernède family being Huguenots, who left southern France in 1685 at the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and emigrated to Holland and then to England. His horror of cold and damp I always thought was due to his southern French blood;

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INTRODUCTION

it was such a real and physical thing. He could stand any amount of heat, but the cold, especially damp cold, seemed positively to numb him. It still seems almost incredible to me how he survived those two awful winters in the trenches. And it must be remembered that he was over forty, doing 2nd lieutenant's work with boys mostly about half his age.

➤ The spelling of the letters also made me rather doubtful. It was a trick of his always to mis-spell certain words in writing or mis-pronounce them in talking. They are all of them family words, generally with a story attached. At first I thought of spelling the words properly, but in many cases this seemed to make the sentences so much more pompous that I have kept them as they were originally written, and can only hope they will not strike any one as either affected or irritating.

Before he went out to France I made him promise that he would tell me everything just as he thought of it and not try to make things out better than they were. He kept that promise, and I think it was a help to him to feel that he could say things just as they occurred to him, though once or twice he was doubtful as to whether he was worrying me by telling me too much. But I repeatedly assured him that my imagination was quite vivid enough to invent the things if he did not tell them to me. And I think he was convinced of it.