

it has won, but the town is a total loss. And that's the story, Your Highness."

"Excellent work," said the king. "Your service to our cause has been invaluable. And now, as my Minister of Offensive Defense, I order you to begin immediately the stockpiling of this magnificent new weapon."

A Letter Home

by Martin Legion

English, Sr.

DEAR Father:

I am tired. I walk the streets from here to there with a weight on my soles that is dragging me into the earth. I wonder why the people can not see what my shoulders carry, the mass that makes me tired at the end of a day when I have done nothing.

There is so little time and so much to do; so much, I will never do any of it well or really understand it. I wonder what I shall ever understand.

Not people, surely, for they are so far away I can hardly reach them at all. I have the feeling that they all know each other very well, that they are great friends. I think I can reach them if I only change one little thing, but how can I know what little thing to change?

I have felt this way before, when my shoulders droop and my mind can hold nothing for more than a minute, and I

have always felt before that it will go away and I will see the world as it is again. I am sure that it is not the world, but me, that has gone wrong, I can feel it. But I can't change if I can't find the path.

I will do the things I have said I will do, because I have said I would, but today I dream of not having them on me—of wandering down a road to some damn place where nobody knows me—and yet knowing I won't because I don't know what is out there and I don't want to learn.

I don't want to learn anything today or do anything but read a rover-boys, or draw a doodle, or build a box, and I can't. For if I do, I won't get done what I have said and then I won't get done what I want to do; even though they are sometimes the same.

On days like today, I am a failure and I wonder why I am allowed to exist or why I can't love or why they don't put me in a book to define "unbelievably bad." I don't know where I'm going and I'm afraid to ask what I am doing for fear the answer will be nothing.

I go to school to get a job, to work my head off, to retire and live in peace, when all I want to do is stop now. My books are waiting for me and, if I work, I will graduate and go forth into the new generation and will no longer be able to speak of " 'they,' the educators," for I will be one; but I know so little, so very little.

I could stay, and learn, but I hate this world of play-acting, or so it seems, where I speak the lines I have learned back at the teacher and he pats me on the head and all is peace. Half the world is at the other's throat and I may go to war to kill a man, although I hate it, and I must listen to people who hear each opinion and stand nowhere.

I am sick, I think, and I know how to end it. But I will miss the day after tomorrow if I do, and so I shall live on—alone.

I hate this place today. And tomorrow? I don't know. But someday, even ten stories won't be high enough and then what will I do?

Tell me, Father, please.