

Dear American Home

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IF THINGS have been dull for you lately and a great deal of controversial gabbing is what you long for—toss in two words—“war” and “mother” and then roll up your mental sleeves and prepare for action.

That's what we did. We published Helen Sloan Stetson's article, “Dear Mother,” presumably a son's letter to his mother before going to war. Some of our readers liked it, some didn't. Everyone's blood pressure seems to have returned to normal now but maybe you'd like a little stimulation. Oh, come on now—be fair. If you didn't like the article read the comments of the readers who did, and if you did like it, why not stir up the brain cells and see how the other half thinks?

“Can't you give us a series of ‘lovely ladies’ articles? The ‘Dear Mother’ article is a real contribution toward saner feminine attitudes and activities. Because lovely ladies oh-so-charming and oh-so-gracious couldn't bear to hear about ugly life happenings, we are now face to face with the most awful ugliness that can befall mankind. Realists' voices were silenced. Hush-hush words held full sway. Less loveliness and more mental honesty might have saved the nation from such slaughters and cruel sufferings as we're now getting in this war. . . . Of course, our males back the women up, encourage them, are part of all practices of shrinking from the truth. The schools of mental dishonesty are many and big—also, coeducational. However, this can't excuse the female sex for having mental delinquency habits.—Mrs. A. Lyon, Pennsylvania.

And here is another reader who liked it. “I have just read ‘Dear Mother’ and I do feel we should all thank you and Mrs. Stetson for it. A homemaker's first instinct so fatally often is to try to shut out the world and its problems, to wall out the confusion, the terror and hurt of today's great disaster, and to pretend fiercely that it isn't there. If we are allowed to do it again, we'll bring another generation down in ruins, ten or twenty years from now. So—please give us more articles to keep us on guard, awake to our tremendous responsibilities.”—Monica Hobbs, North Carolina.

Now that you've read some “pros” here we go for some “cons.” Ready? “Poor select- ing when you publish such trash as ‘Dear

Mother.’ No doubt he is *one* in a million that inspired mother to write such junk. My boy went away without a sneer on his face, without blaming his mother or his veteran dad for what he has to face. My boy went away to fight for America, mistakes or no mistakes. He figured that when trouble arose ten blocks away there was no use in calling a cop ten miles away to settle things but it looks like that's what happened.”—A. J. Freeman, California.

“That special little article ‘Dear Mother,’ instead of being listed under ‘Inspirational’ should have been listed under ‘Propaganda.’ ‘John’ seems to think he has found the solution to the problem of war but if his ideas are followed we shall be involved in more wars—not less wars. Let ‘John’ and his parents probe, study and dig for the truth—how we became involved in World War I. Much sand (propaganda) will be thrown in their eyes to try to prevent them from finding the truth but persistence will win. The first casualty of war is Truth and as George Washington said, ‘eternal vigilance is the price of Liberty.’ Half-truths uttered by ‘John’ are more vicious than outright lies. Unless you wish to get into a real discussion of our involvement in foreign wars (which would have to be postponed until this war is over), please confine your articles to home decorations, gardens, etc.”—Mrs. J. A. Boersig, Ohio.

One more on “Dear Mother” and then we get to other article discussions. “Is it necessary to sugar-coat truth to make it digestible for adult readers? And isn't it even more shocking to feel impelled to offer truth dished out as a sort of super-wisdom of modern youth—youth, if one were to take the letter signed ‘John’ as a sample, that plainly shows it has no clear understanding of the past, is badly muddled on today, and has little or no perspective on the future? The small part of truth that comes through to any of us should be shucked of all moth-eaten sentimentality: it should be stripped of all peeling guilt, and above all it should be saved from the corn-syrup dippings it so often gets when being handled by self-righteous youth. . . . The most that any parent can do for children is to assure them that, though they should

BUY MORE WAR BONDS

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