

Clara Jane Cox Epperson Articles
Putnam County Herald, Cookeville, TN

Putnam County Herald, Cookeville, TN:

Thursday, 8 February 1917

SCRAPS OR VERSE AND PROSE, By Clara Cox Epperson

“BEHIND THE SCENES”

It was my privilege and pleasure to go behind the scenes of the Russian Ballet, with a friend, at the performance to Nashville, recently, and it was an interesting and novel experience. One very gorgeous scene was over, and the confusion of rearranging the scenery, costumes etc. for the next scene was appalling, trunks and boxes were piled in rows, with hurrying people trying to pack the used things and unpack the ones needed, and with too little room to do so conveniently, in the dressing rooms it was just as crowded.

We were shown into the dressing room of the two leading women dancers, and my friend interviewed them as they arranged their costumes for the next scene. They were very pleasant in spite of the hurry and confusion, and I thought it a proof of much poise for them to be so calm and polite under such trying circumstances.

Just before leaving my friend asked them “What do you think of suffrage.” One of them replied, “Oh, we do not think.” “We do not have time to think of anything but the art.” The other dainty little dancer said “It is to dance, to sleep, to eat, to rest, to dance again, and we do not have time to think, at all.” And with a lovely smile she dismissed the subject as one not to be compared with “the art.”

Then I realized that their lives after all are much like the busy housekeeper, revolving around the wheel of duty daily. With us it is to work, to cook, to eat, to sleep, to rest, just in order to cook and work again, and the revolution of the wheel of life goes on forever. When we are in front of the footlights and see the tinsel and glory we feel that they must lead butterfly lives, but when we go behind the scenes and see the sordid disarray and confusion, the rush of the busy people who still take time to smile upon the stranger within the gate, we realize to some extent the hardship of their lives. The sacrifice of home, home ties and loved ones, the sacrifice of time for individual pleasures; the sacrifice of the assurance that they can sit down and rest awhile, some times, as do we tired housekeepers, without being haunted by the horror of being dropped from the ranks of salary earner, the dread of old age with no abiding place, no loved ones to watch tenderly and care for willingly through the period that Time marks us as incapacitated, while waiting for death to claim us, and all these sacrifices for “the art” and I realized that all the tinsel and glory, all the fame, admiration and applause will not suffice for the loneliness of age and the loss of loved ones.

Could we look behind the scenes of the lives these whom we think happiest and gayest, I wonder how many cares and burdens we might find. There is no life howsoever protected, but has its trials, its burdens. We can learn a lesson of going cheerfully about our work, whether it be “the art”, or the more homely tasks of living, with the courage to still smile upon the stranger that passes us by, as well as the friend that is near, and to hold to the principle that it is not to think, if the thoughts be unpleasant, unhappy or discouraging. It is not to theorize over the problems of life, it is not to worry over the inevitable nor the unavoidable, it is just to live. If we make living daily, what the little dancer makes her art, daily, public acclamation and adulation may not be ours, but contentment, peace of heart and the devotion of loved ones will be our “tinsel and glory”, but the tinsel will be pure gold.

Putnam County Herald, Cookeville, TN:

Thursday, 31 May 1917

SCRAPS OF VERSE AND PROSE, By Clara Cox Epperson

In a little poem published recently entitled "Our Gifts", I alluded to meaning of the flag to mothers just now, under the shadow of war, in the following lines;

Our cross is red, white and blue,
Humbly we bow.

This was replied to in the patriotic and beautiful poem that follows, entitled "The Flag", and written by Bro. J. D. Gunn, a minister of the Christian church, and a crown is truly a much better interpretation of our flag, and a more hopeful one, than a cross.

THE FLAG

Is the flag a cross - - to you, to me,
The glorious colors, red white and
blue?
No! Not a cross but rather a crown,
Bedecked with jewels of every hue.

There is honor, freedom and liberty,
Radiant from each of its stars;
And bravery, courage and sacrifice,
Shed forth from each of its bars.

Is the flag a cross - - to you, to me,
Nay! Not a cross, but a crown
How can it be a cross to you - - to me,
When it had brought us only renown'

The red put there by our father's
blood,
The blue, reflected freedom of the
skies,
The white, the purity of our womanhood,
And thus our nation it glorifies.

It shrouds the bodies of our sainted
dead.
Within its folds are memories rare
No such history had the wide world
read
As we find imprinted there.

And when to its defense our boys
shall go,
Shall we regard it as a cross, you
and I?
No! Not a cross but a glorious crown,
For which we are willing to die

A crown to the nation as it floats in
The breeze,
A crown of glory in lands afar,
A crown of honor as it sails the
Seas,
A message of freedom in every star.
J. D. Gunn, Sparta

Putnam County Herald, Cookeville, TN:

Thursday, 19 July 1917

SCRAPS OF VERSE AND PROSE, By Clara Cox Epperson

OUR SOLIDER BOYS:

There are coming home, and with honors, every one of them. Failures? - - Nay, not one of them. Through the long summer days of heat they have toiled regardless of the sun and the storms and the rain, wet to the skin with rain, or with the perspiration of trench digging and long marching, still with a smile on their faces and hope in their hearts, nor have they failed by the wayside in defeat, not a one of them. Upheld by the pride and courage inherited from brave, patriotic ancestors, they have borne the hardships in the heat of the day, and the studies in the hours of the night, training both mind and body for the strenuous duties of warfare, in order to protect our homes and our country, and encouraged by the hope of the reward awaiting them at the goal the commission of officer ship, at the end of the three months hard service and they have been rewarded by commissions, every one of them, and Putnam county should be very proud of the fact that one major, one captain and nine second lieutenants can she boast of from one summer's training and if there is a slacker in man or woman in the county may shame be upon them when they face these brave boys who have proven true blue and the right stuff all the way through.

Following is a list of Putnam County officers:

Major Clarence H. Fitzgerald, Monterey, TN.

Captain James T. Quarles, Cookeville. Officers Reserve Corps (Capt. Quarles will go immediately to Harvard, near Boston, for trench warfare training).

Second Lieut. Sam Coile, Cookeville Coast Artillery Fortress, Monroe, VA.

Second Lieut. David Lansden, Cookeville, Field Artillery Officers' Reserve Corps (Will go to France).

Second Lieut. Jere D. Barnes, Cookeville, Cavalry Section Officers Reserve Corps, 53rd Infantry, Columbia, SC.

Second Lieut. Donald Russell, Cookeville, Royal Flying School, Toronto, Canada, Aviation Corps.

Second Lieut. Charles Craig, Cookeville, Regular Army, 52nd Infantry, Oglethorpe.

Second Lieut. Sam R. Epperson, Algood, Regular Army, Field Artillery.

Second Lieut. Grover Boyd, Cookeville, of Ft. Myer Training School.

One major, one captain, and nine lieutenants. Take off your hats to them - - give them a salute and a warm welcome, and a God speed and blessing when they go again, for they go to face danger, perhaps death, for our safety, our freedom and our peace.

If you're proud of our dear boys,
then show it.
Do not let them go away
and not know it.
They need all your prayers and love,
That they may of courage prove.
If you do feel proud of them,
pray let them know it.

Putnam County Herald, Cookeville, TN

Thursday, 30 August 1917

YOUR FLAG AND MY FLAG, By Wilbur D. Nesbit

Your flag and my flag!
And how it flies today,
in your land and my land
And half a world away!
Rose red and blood red
The stripes forever gleam;
Snow white and soul white
The good fore fathers dream
Sky blue and true blue, with stars to
gleam aright.
The gloried guidon of the day; a
shelter through the night.

Your flag and my flag!
To every star and stripe
The drums beat as hearts beat,
And pipers shrilly pipe
Your flag and my flag,
A blessing in the sky,
Your hope and my hope,
It never hid a lie!
Home land and far land and half the
world around,
Old Glory hears one glad salute and
ripple to the sound.

Your flag and my flag!
And Oh, how much it holds!
Your land and my land
Secure within it folds!
Your heart and my heart
Beat quicker at the sight,
Sun kissed and wind blessed,
Red and blue and white,
The one flag, the great flag, the flag
for me and you,
Glorified all else besides the red
and white and blue!

The above poem was sent in by one of the brave mothers of one of our brave boys. Mrs. Lansden whose son, David is going to France.

Putnam County Herald, Cookeville, TN

Thursday, 6 September 1917

SCRAPS OF VERSE AND PROSE, By Clara Cox Epperson

THE FIRST TO DO:

The program arranged in honor of the seven boys first called from this county to serve their country was very fitting and beautiful and not only the boys were inspired to new bravery and courage but the mothers

and fathers, gathered together in the courthouse auditorium came away with a still deeper feeling of patriotism, a still greater love for this dear country, and a still more high appreciation of the privileges allowed us in this free country under the safety of the rule of a Christian president and the peace of a Christian nation.

These seven boys were splendid looking, with the stamp of courage, dignity and nobility on their faces, and they each seemed imbued with the spirit described in the following extract from the Macon Telegraph, which goes to prove that not all the youth of Georgia is under the influence of Tom Watson.

“Drafted, conscripted and coerced”
Not on your constitution’
I am selected chosen, picked, by my own father nation.
To do a bit of work I am cut out for
by measure
To meet this honor it shall be my
individual pleasure.

“Now they’ve elected me to wear the
honored khaki dressing.
To shoulder arms and march away
with all the nation’s blessing.
I am obedient to the call, and glad to
be connected
With just the biggest job on earth!
I’m proud I was elected.

Mr. Maddux in his thanks to the program committee, the speakers, the ladies who presented the comfort bags, and the audience, said

“We go to serve our country.”

Putnam County Herald, Cookeville, TN:

Thursday, 3 April 1930

“Miss Laura”
By Clara Cox Epperson

Mr. and Mrs. George Bilbrey are leaving Thursday afternoon for their home in Harrison, AR.

It is with great regret that the many friends of Mrs. Bilbrey, (nee Miss Laura Copeland), learn of her going away to another sate to make her home.

“Miss Laura” has become a household word, especially since she has been serving the readers, young and old, in the Circulating Library for several years. It was through the kindness of Miss Laura that the Book Lovers’ Club was able to establish this library in 1924, and it is through her continued kindness that the library will continue in this room in her home as long as she lives. She is a great reader and lover of good books and it has been a genuine delight to her to circulate books in the town. Through her interest, the interest of her cousin, Mr. Helen Ely Richardson, was aroused, who has been a constant contributor of beautiful and worth-while books, Mrs. Richardson having recently sent several volumes of the latest and best fiction.

“Miss Laura” has held a unique position in Cookeville, and there are few who have won the place in the hearts of the people that she has, with her bright, hopeful outlook on life and her interest in everything pertaining to Cookeville and its people. That she will be missed, goes without saying. Each valuable person fills a space in life that no one else can exactly fill, and there will be a place in memory held sacred

for her, with the hope that she and her husband will decide to return to Cookeville in the near future to make their home.

When we see her roses bloom
We will remember her;
Each petal with its fragrance sweet
Will speak to us of her.

Around the home to which she goes
May loveliest roses bloom;
And only happiness be hers
In their rich perfume.

*Read more about Clara Jane Cox Epperson and the History of Putnam Co., TN at:
<http://www.ajlambert.com>