

Fancee

11. April 15.

My dear Hb

Your letter of March eighteenth came last week. You need not apologize for not writing at more frequent intervals as I know that your time must be well taken up. It was too bad you were laid up with a bad throat and I am very glad to note that it was almost well again when you wrote.

The physical training and rides will do the officers a world of good but nothing mortal hand can accomplish would ever make even an imitation soldier out of Reason. Your late R. S. M. Campbell is acting as my Battery sergeant major and he makes a real fist of it. He is a good enough soldier in some ways but too damned pleasant to the rank and file to suit me, just what I imagine Reason would be. It is almost pitiable to hear him calling a man down, his words lack the necessary expression and are absolutely futile.

I would not be too anxious to drop the colonelcy to take command of the divisional cavalry. It is alright to accept the command of the latter but the O.C. Divisional Cavalry with us is a lieutenant

colonel and there is no reason in the world why you should not retain your present rank and still take the job. The duties of the divisional company are not very exciting. They provide an escort for the G.O.C. division, patrol and police roads along which movements are taking place and do a certain amount of orderly work. Of course, if the campaign ever assumes an aspect other than that of siege warfare their work will perhaps be more exciting. It is doubtful, in my opinion, however, if a change of the style of warfare will ever take place.

I had about a hell but he always manages to get into mischief of some sort. I can well believe that a common mortal would have succumbed at once to his injuries. Campbell Becher ought to know better than to fill the papers with bull dust but of course most of the others don't. A few of these letters have been in the papers that I have received and the stuff in them is enough to make a saint laugh. Mostly lies and big ones at that, men talk about dodging shells and being under fire and all the rest of it who have never been within a mile or so of the actual fighting. I receive the mail from the 12th and most of that sort that I get my hands

or never go any further. I saved a man only the other day for dreaming on his imagination and he went dead again in a hurry. He had never left the horse lines when the guns were in action and yet represented himself as being saved from a horrible death dozens of times through the merciful interposition of a good providence or something of the sort.

Hope your uniforms and boots turn out to be satisfactory. I shall have to get something lighter very soon as the clothes we are all wearing, well I fear, be too warm for the hot weather. However there is time enough for that yet. The last couple of days have been almost as bright and beautiful as in Canada but the weather is not yet settled and more rain is still probable.

On Saturday the 3^d Infantry and Artillery brigades were inspected by General Smith-Dorrien. He was very decent, shook hands with all Battery commanders and spoke to every man wearing a ribbon. After it was over he addressed the officers, complimented us on the work done in the past month and announced that we are to go north of Ypres within the next few days and take over a part of the line now being held by the French. As this part of the line has seen the hottest fighting all along it is likely

that we shall see some more of it on our arrival. Even as I write I can hear an occasional gun from that direction and we must be at least fifteen or twenty miles away at present.

My battery is in very good shape, both horses and men are pretty hard and when one allows for active service conditions they are fairly smart in appearance. The horses look rough with their long coats and some are very poor as a result of exposure but I have not lost any lately. Yesterday a mare dropped a foal (miscarriage) as a result of a kick but she will be fit for work in a day or so. Another mare is undoubtedly in foal and I shall have to get rid of her which is a pity as she is one of my best wheel horses and always seems to look well.

It is a pleasure to have Father's letters re business, they are comprehensive and show, as you say, a healthy condition of things even if not much prospect of profits. When this job is over we shall have to do something to better conditions. The only solution is a more profitable line and for the life of me I cannot think of anything. Tell Sally that she might occasionally write her brother (in law) a few lines if only to say that you and she have not yet had your first

quarrel. Does she still intend to come to England when you do? I see James Wright occasionally, he is the only other man in our class in this division and has command of No. 3 Company (Field) Canadian Engineers. Peterson is a major in Kitchener's army but has not come out yet and both Walter Reid and Flagg are with English units but where they are located I don't know. Frank Reid is at the base, doing office work and Gordon Hunt is also there but what doing I don't know. The portion of the 2nd Contingent that came over is there too (Shorecliffe) and will be used as drafts for us. They are pretty sick about it too, I hear. Eddie Mills is also there in charge of the artillery base details, I had a letter from him the other day and must answer it shortly.

The Canadian hoots, harness, and wagons were all condemned by the British authorities and no Canadian unit was allowed to proceed to the front with any such equipment. Not a very nice record but pretty easy for the grafting element as they doubtless got good prices. It would be interesting to know how many millions Sam Hughes squandered on these items alone.

It is now ten o'clock p.m. and one of the cocks in the local barnyard has just emitted a vociferous crow. Wagon

suppose one of the lens^{b.} must have made a
mistake in setting the alarm clock which
would account for the mistake. Anyway I
shall shortly retire so will draw to a close.
This letter is not very legible but the
light is bad and as you know my
penmanship (never in this case) was never
of the best. Love to all and write when
you can

your brother
Wood.

P. S. - I am retaining care of myself - so
much so that my Sam Brown is now
extended to the uttermost hole. Will
have to do less good work as a
teacher. How is that for a joke.
Ask mother if she sees the point.
EWF

The enclosed clipping covers my time
casualties. Please file.