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Flanders  
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Dearest mother

By now I suppose you will be back at Oakwood and I know you will have enjoyed your visits with the various aunts.

We have had a lot of rainy weather lately and I suppose we are in for more or less of it for the next three months. I would prefer our own Canadian winter but perhaps the wet is better. We can always make the dug outs more or less weather proof but it would be a problem to keep warm with the weather as cold as an average winter at home. I am very comfortable at present and feel quite well. Fear I eat rather more than I should when getting so little exercise but after all that is nothing to worry about.

I hope the Homestake Mining project does materialize as Aunt Daisy and the secretary have

2

certainly labored long and hard  
at it! It is nice to hear they  
are so comfortably situated in  
Boston and I wish still to be  
so near Aunt Miriam.

I notice that you say Aunt  
Dizay feels "the indifference" of  
your children and although  
you don't say as much you rather  
reproach us all for it. May I  
lay my views before you. I am  
not sure whether your other "children"  
will concur or not. I am very  
fond of Aunt Dizay and any  
of the so called indifference arises  
simply on account of her treatment of  
you. When she was with us for so  
long she was often frightfully rude  
and unkind to you and apparently  
quite indifferent to all you were  
trying to do for her. Why I have  
actually seen you in tears about it!  
I fully realize she was not well at  
the time, not herself at all but we  
"children" could not love you as  
we do and see you subjected to  
such treatment without resenting  
it. One other point and I

am done. When Father desired  
 to gamble any of his hard earned  
 (for they are hard earned) savings  
 in the precious Homestake mine  
 he was severely criticized by both  
 the Kendalls and the Barrons. I can  
 quite forgive the former for it; it  
 was a vital matter with them and  
 they probably thought Father had  
 lots of money. But I resented very  
 strongly anything that that  
 Prince of Charlatans Will Barron  
 said or inferred about Father or  
 about C. Leonard and Sons. The  
 inference his attitude suggested was  
 that we were too mean or too  
 "stuck in the mud" to take advantage  
 of a good thing when we were told  
 about it especially when it was  
 a "genius" who was telling us. This  
 from a man who had been living  
 on the income of funds Father  
 had helped to put together was  
 a little too much.

as you know I subscribed to  
 some of the stock and put several  
 hundred dollars into it. I did not  
 do it because I thought it

was a bonanza but I did it primarily to help Aunt Bizay. I did not complete my payments (for I am always hard up as you know) and I suppose what I put in is gone. That I don't mind in the slightest. It was a gamble and I am a good loser and if it helped them it was surely in a good cause. All these things are past and quite forgotten as far as I am concerned and I hope you will forgive me for referring to them.

But don't let your loving and sympathetic nature be too easily affected, there are usually two sides to anything and it's the side of your "children" that I've tried to outline (very clumsily) above.

FINIS

Itt came in on Thursday with White and sat for an hour with me. He was busy making a survey of some of the back lines of defenses which run quite near my guns. He is well and (I think) quite likes it all. His job is a nice one, more independent

than mine and less dangerous (though  
 mine is only so at times); but  
 when a rail is on I shall always  
 see more of the fun than he  
 which pretty well compensates.  
 I got my old groom back  
 today and will put him in  
 charge of my horses when opportunity  
 offers. He used to be with Beck  
 and I know him up there so  
 think he is faithful to my  
 interests. He was sent to hospital  
 with a broken arm last spring  
 and is only now getting back to  
 work. My servant Shirley is  
 thinking of trying for a commission  
 in the British Army. He is really  
 quite suited for me, a public  
 school (Eton) education and as  
 he has some influential friends  
 he may succeed. I'm sure I hope  
 he does though I would miss  
 his capable and considerate service.

Am glad you saw Miss Woodman.  
 Her letter reached me about a month  
 ago and I replied not long since  
 so she should have it by now. She  
 was in England only a few years

ago and evidently speaks and writes  
human as there were several  
quotations in her letter

Please ask Alice to look in  
some of the small drawers or  
compartments in my desk and see if  
she can find any military cutting  
cards of mine. If so she might  
want me fifty or so as one might  
come in useful every now and then.

We now have a new paymaster  
in the brigade - they Robertson who  
was in the same class with Ibb and  
I at Upper Canada. He is engaged  
to Ethel Purley whose father is  
acting Canadian High Commissioner.  
I think the girl is a cousin or  
else a great friend of Ethel Hesper's.  
The men are paid twice a month  
at the rate of thirty francs a  
month or about six dollars. This  
is partly so that they won't have  
a great deal more money at their  
disposal than the English Tommies  
and partly so that a man will  
save his pay and not blow it in  
needlessly over here. Some of the  
Battery Commanders and myself have  
asked that the rate be slightly

increased during the winter months so that the men can buy certain luxuries. I do not know whether this request will be granted or not.

The Colonel got back from leave early in the week and it is probable that I shall take mine about a week from today. It will then be just about four months since I was last in England. I am not particularly keen about going just now but if I don't I may not get another chance until after the New Year. They are now giving leave to every officer who has been out here three months but the 1st Canadian Division had to wait five months before any of us got away. The men are not so fortunate as only about a third of mine have been away and the same is true of other units. It is a question of accommodation. Only one train and boat a day are allotted for the purpose and when one takes into consideration the number of troops over here it can be realized what a small proportion one train

or heat could accommodate  
 Last Tuesday a German aeroplane  
 was brought down by one of ours and  
 it fell just behind our trenches.  
 The observer was killed (shot through  
 the stomach) but the pilot only  
 slightly wounded was taken prisoner.  
 When it fell the Germans opened  
 on it with artillery so as to destroy  
 it and prevent its being repaired  
 and used. They fired over one  
 hundred rounds but did not seriously  
 damage it. Strange to say the  
 machine gun it was armed with was  
 a Colt marked "3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian  
 Infantry Brigade" and therefore one  
 of the guns we lost in the fighting  
 at St Julian last April. It was a  
 remarkable coincidence as the plane  
 fell behind trenches occupied by  
 the 3<sup>rd</sup> Can. Infantry Brigade and  
 they thus regain a machine gun  
 which the enemy has had for  
 six months or so.

His Majesty, the Prince of  
 Wales and General Joffre were  
 here one day during the past  
 week and had a review of the



Canadian Corps a few miles from here. Of course the batteries and infantry ~~actually~~ on duty could only send detachments. I suggest and three men represented the 12<sup>th</sup>. I understand that everything went off very well and the Corps Commander later issued an order expressing his great satisfaction with the parade.

Elbert Greene has now been away nearly four weeks but I am expecting him back tomorrow. It will be a relief as there are few enough officers when all are present and if things had tightened up at all during his absence we would have been badly handicapped. He has been taking electric treatment for his sciatica and writes that he is much improved.

The Colonel had a narrow escape from being killed by one of his own batteries. He was some distance out in front of their guns when they had a premature. One of the shrapnel bullets passed through his British warm, his

jacket and breeches and finally  
 lodged in his breeches pocket.  
 It bruised him badly but it  
 was a marvellously close call.

If I go on I have shall  
 probably spend a day with Sarah  
 also go and see the Lymphons  
 in Wiltshire. I may also go to  
 Sharncliffe and look up some of  
 the people there but I have not  
 decided on this. There are two or  
 three I ought to see there, one of  
 them being Kathleen Brodwick  
 who has been very decent about  
 writing, sending me papers etc. I  
 shall also call on Mrs. Allport,  
 she continues to send me a  
 box every ten days or so which  
 is more than kind of her.

My best love to you all  
 your devoted son

Ward