

## \*Laddie Abroad—First Long Leave—London

By Bonnycastle Dale

\*Owing to the enemy using the word Fritz, our Gunner Abroad is now called Laddie

I HAVE just applied for my first long leave. I can't see why a few of the artillery take country invitations when there is London to see. That's where I am going.

I am the pride and envy of the tent, yes, of the left section of the battery. I received a package with a pair of very fine white socks yesterday, and early this morning, at reveille, when it was too dark to see, and when you are not obliged to have full kit on, I hurriedly pulled them on over my riding breeches and "fell in." I saw a snicker run along the line and all eyes were on my poor legs. I glanced down and those extra long white socks had baby pink tops—the boys are laughing yet.

So many of the boys have to be treated for tonsils. Tell all friends to have theirs attended to in Canada and miss all this "sick leave."

Just think, it's ten o'clock at night as I am writing this and daylight, too; the result of putting the clock an hour ahead for the whole country.

I had another dip in the "channel." Guess they turned on the ice water. But I went to Folkestone and bought a real "dip" in a bath.

It is wonderful to see the well dressed crowd on the "Leas" and to hear the military bands playing on this one day of the week—Saturday afternoon holiday. One would almost think there was no war. This summer resort is for the wealthy, and the hotels remind one of the Royal Alexandra at Winnipeg, and the King Edward at Toronto. We played billiards this evening; there are no pool tables in England.... Say! I hope I get that leave.

We had another fish ration yesterday. We call him Sir Sam Fish now; they are not really bad when fresh.

I have just bought a coat. Mine was a bag of rags. I paid two shillings for it; you cannot get a new one unless you are really in tatters. You will remember writing the joke in The Western Home Monthly about our sentry in Cobourg, Jacko, who fell into the ditch? Well, he was here in the tent when I read your story and he laughed as hard as the rest.

I've got to quit for a while—"Physical Jerks—Parade!".....

Well, now, I have time to continue. Do you know we are nearly roasted with the heat this August in England—it's better than the rain of April to July, anyway.

While we were doing Physical Jerks an aeroplane, evidently interested in our odd evolutions, came circling overhead watching us. I know I'll not get the crick out of my neck in some time from watching it.

Oh! how can I write? I'm on the edge of the platform in the recreation room. A chap, guess he's a blacksmith, is pounding the piano, about a dozen couples of men are dancing and everything's topsyturvy.

I am on aerial piquet to-night; hope a Zepp comes over. Our subsection is in a mess—the No. 1 (sergeant in charge) selected the piquet twenty men short and dismissed the rest. Of course, every man saw the error and every man made himself scarce and, when the orderly of the day came around, there was

an awful fuss; he had to go to our line and get the men—not a soul in the tents, of course. He managed to mark down ten men, but No. 1 will get it to-morrow. No drafts for France have been picked lately. I am just waiting ready to go.

Just think, some of our men on a route march had to pay the farmers for filling their water bottles—a penny a bottle. This is so different from the usual kindness, honesty and generosity of the English countryside.

I saw some bluebills and other wild duck in a park lately. Oh, how I will miss those glorious Canadian fall days, when we camped and photographed and shot. I was surprised to see a big blue heron here the other day, and our common mudhens, but there are very few birds along the seashore here.

I just heard we are not to go on any drafts until the wounded convalescents are all returned to the front; they have first chance, being experienced.

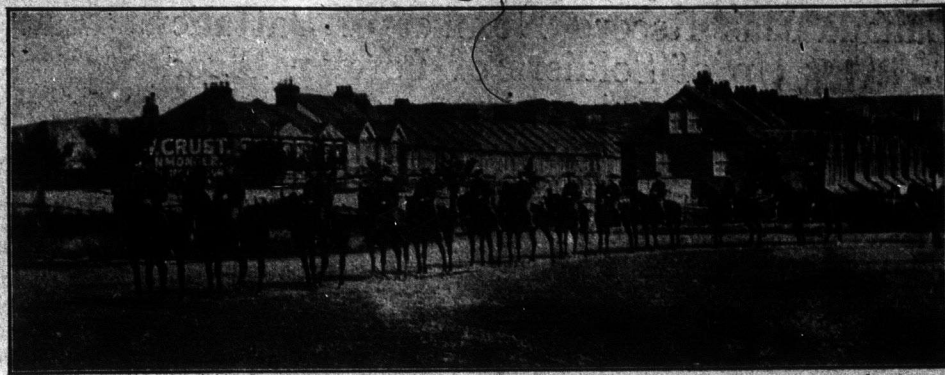
I have a new job—mess orderly. It's good to learn everything. Of course, there is a "butt" in the subsection—this evening he picked a cigarette out of a box offered to him—it had a nice wee stick of cordite in the centre. There was some doings after it went off. Then he sang for us. Every man took off his hat and stood at attention as solemn as owls and silent—say, that was no name for it. If the movies ever took this tent of ours, they would have some film.



Hussars Parade, Shorncliffe Park.

I see on the notice board to-night that I have got my pass for London. Sorry I haven't time to tell you all about the big Zepp raid last night. Six big ones glowing like red hot cigars when the searchlights caught them, and guns going off everywhere. I'll never forget the searchlights on one long, golden looking sausage-like thing. She got it hard as she edged off over the sea. The half-hour I spent looking at it was something like a horseshoe or ball game. Up goes a shell. Everyone yells: "That's going to get it!"—"No!" they groan, as it misses, and when she dove down in an attempt to escape the beams of light, we all cheered, thinking she was done for.

There was an order last night that all the tents in our line had to be taken down and the floors lifted and cleaned. Just



Horse Training, Shorncliffe Camp.

the chance we wanted to get at the thievish rats. About one hundred men armed with sticks of all kinds stood about each floor as it was raised and a regular forest of sticks whacked down—and most of them missed the squealing, leaping vermin. A whip here, a mallet there, whistled and pounded, then of all the cheers when one would leap right into the crowd and the men would fall over tent pegs and bundles of canvas—and whisper—it wasn't only the rats that got the blows. I stood in my tent door and laughed until the tears ran down my face. I saw some officers coming over—guess they thought it was a general engagement by the noise.

I think we may have another air raid to-night, as the weather is so favorable. There are charts showing just about where the next raids are liable to take place—sounds raw, but it is based on the moon and the weather.

London—I am staying near Peckham and it does feel good to get into sheets

Embankment, the parks—and my feet are tired and my eyes are so heavy I can't keep them open any longer even to write you.

I awoke in a soft feather bed, between white clean sheets, just as this world was before this cruel war began. I cannot understand why man must always fight upon this earth. Will law and religion never tame the worse members of the race? I could quite understand it if we were attacked by, say, the people of Mars—we must defend our earth—but that man must, age after age, fight man, puzzles me. Surely we have more sense and reason than the lower animals! You and I well know that they daily fight, in water, field and air; but they have only one instinct—to feed and fight if needs be for that food—while we are blessed with love and law, sweet family ties, excellent examples, a most wonderful library, both sacred and profane, and yet to-day the whole world is one huge battlefield, all because one man, a crippled man at that, with only one good arm, indulged in dreams of world conquest. You remember telling me of the Germans in Chicago who told you he was a madman every summer. I believe that. If his press-clipping bureau is faithful and puts before him the opinion of the press of the world, he must know himself by now. Here I am writing political economy in bed and all London lies outdoors.

Later—How the time flies, actually I had to telephone for a bed at the Y.M.C.A. near the station where the last military train leaves. This huge city speeds the days away. I did not even see the King's Palace nor the German mine-laying sub, but I've seen 'Arry and 'Arriet, stared and been stared at, had some real meals at a real table—honestly, I didn't grab at a thing, nor throw a bone through the door once. If there is anything you want that you cannot buy in this big city, I would like its name. Oh! the wonders of the modern art stores, side by side with an old bookseller's place, the princely hotels crowded with khaki, the shades of all the countries under the sun, the glory of the dim interiors of the mighty churches, the beauty of the voices of their boy choirs, the volume of their great organs that set the stone-laid floors throbbing, the banners still in the high vaults that snapped in the winds of all the continents and billowed out on every sea.

I tell you it makes one feel good to be even a cub of such a race.

I must run—goodbye—off—back to the artillery camp.

## The Late Rev. W. Wye Smith.

From Burford, Ont., comes the news of the death of the Rev. Wm. Wye Smith, on January 6th. The deceased gentleman, who had reached the fine old age of 90 years, was a well known Congregational minister, but, perhaps, still better known as a writer. He was an enthusiastic Scot and a fine authority on Scottish matters. Readers of The Western Home Monthly will recall that until recently he was an occasional and interesting contributor to this magazine. He was the author of many poems and also of a version of the New Testament in the broad Scotch dialect.

## The Thimble

By Arthur Macy

A vain and silly Thimble  
Unto a Finger said,  
"I'm very brisk and nimble  
With needle and with thread!"

Said the Finger to the Thimble,  
"Your words I can't approve,  
For I'm the one that's nimble;  
It's I that make you move."



Royal Field Artillery, Shorncliffe Camp.