

of this. Much depends upon what one is looking for, or what his mind is constituted to receive and magnify.

The Bruce Battalion has come in for a great deal of slander originating with the base-minded. The question is frequently asked, "Why is the Bruce Battalion being kept so long in England?" And some have answered by saying that there is so much disease among the men that they never are fit to go to France.

This explanation cannot be other than the vapourings of the thoughtless scandal-monger. In the first place there were in England until recently, one hundred other battalions as well as the Bruce, and there is now about forty other Canadian battalions there. This is the Canadian army reserve from which drafts are from time to time made to keep up the strength of the battalions at the front as they are worn down. So there is no reason for wonder that the Bruce Battalion is still in England.

There is no sense whatever in the explanation that the battalion is unfit for service because of the debauchery of the men. Why should this battalion, in many respects the best which ever left Canada, be so much worse than other battalions? That question does not need to be answered. Besides many of the men are known in their home localities to be sober, clean-living fellows who would stand up under temptation if any men would.

A certain amount of debauchery is inseparable from army camp life, and ignorant persons, with eyes and ears for that only which is low, seeing this, come away to report that it is the whole thing.

Thoughtful people, with the good of the soldiers at heart will consider where this scandal talk comes from and value it accordingly. It would not be worth referring to, were it not that the long and otherwise unexplained stay of the Bruce Battalion in England help to give the slander currency and causes many to suspect that there might be some truth in it.

The Village Blacksmith

By Pte. A. W. Drummond, 15th Field Ambulance

In a shady Liphook street grows a
spreading chestnut tree,
Where the natives claim the village
smithy stood.

There the smith with arms of brown
Kept his daughter from all harm
As he swung the heavy sledge to earn
his food.

Nearby stands the village church, with
the pew that held the smith,
As he watched his daughter singing in
the choir.

But one day the village fool
Showed to me the village school,
From where the children trooped to see
the fire.

Now at Eashing I am told grows another
chestnut tree.

While the village smithy stands beneath
its shade

Where the smith his bellows blew,
And the creditors but few,
As he toiled and strove each day to
earn his bread.

But the little church I saw, had no pew
to hold the smith,
Had no choir to put his pretty daughter
in.

It was older than the tree,
That yon native showed to me,
Yet to tear it down, I fear would be a sin.
Now, if you can decide where the village
smithy stood,

Was it Eashing, was it Liphook, can
you tell?

Many other people say,
In their village 'cross the way,
Was the place it stood for years before
it fell.

Let the critics wise decide, we will by
their word abide,

Where the village smithy once was won't
to stand,

Where the smith paid all his due,
And on Sunday from his pew,
Watched that pretty daughter sing to
beat the band.