

Documentary Evidence

A Novel in a Nut-Shell

or A Romance of War

SEC. I (i) Extract from the Puddletown News, Oct. 11, 1914:

Miss Sophonisba Smith is visiting her aunt at Mistletoe Cottage.

(ii) Leave of Absence.

Mudhill Camp, Oct. 12, 1914.

No. 1234567 Pte. J. Brown has permission to be absent from his quarters until Reveille, Oct. 15, 1914, for the purpose of visiting Puddletown.

(Signed) W. FIREBRACE, Lt.-Col.,
O.C. the Umpty-Umpth Batt.

(iii) Extract from Conduct Sheet, Oct. 18, 1914

No. 1234567 Pte. J. Brown, absent without leave, 14 days C.B.

(iv) Copy of Receipt. J. BROWN—

Dr. to MESSRS. BUYEM & SELLEM,
Jewelers, Puddletown.

To 1 Ring 2 15 0

Received Payment, with thanks,
Nov. 5, 1914.

SEC. II (i) Extract from the Rum Creek Gazette, Rum Creek, Alberta, March 5, 1915:

Advices from the front indicate that the Rum Creek boys with the Umpty-Umpth Batt. are now in France, etc., etc.

(ii) Various receipts for parcels signed by J. Brown, March to October, 1915.

(iii) Leave Warrant No. XYZ12374.

Nov. 1, 1915.

No. 1234567 Pte. J. Brown is proceeding to England on leave. Destination, Puddletown. Returning, will report to R.T.O. at Victoria Station, London, Nov. 8.

(iv) Extract from Pay Sheets, Pay and Record Office, London:

No. 1234567 Pte. J. Brown, on leave . . . 25 0 0

(Signed) J. BROWN.

(v) Extract from Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, Puddletown:

John Brown, 24, single, rancher, Rum Creek, Alberta, Canada, to Sophonisba Smith, 22, single, Puddletown, Dumppshire.

(vi) Extract from Visitors' Book, Longshoreman's Arms, Shrimpsville-on-Sea, Nov. 5, 1915:

Mr. and Mrs. J. Brown, Puddletown. Room No. 6.

(vii) Extract from Conduct Sheet, Nov. 14, 1915:

No. 1234567 Pte. J. Brown, overstaying leave, 28 days Field Punishment No. 5.

SEC. III (i) Extract from Roll of Honour, July 1, 1916:

WOUNDED—No. 1234567 Pte. J. Brown.

(ii) Extract from the Puddletown News, Aug. 10, 1916:

To Mr. and Mrs. J. Brown, on Aug. 8, at Mistletoe Cottage, Puddletown—a daughter. Both doing well.

(iii) Extract from the register at the Connaught Hotel, Rum Creek, Alberta, Dec. 10, 1916:

Mr. John Brown
Mrs. John Brown
Miss Ypresia Festuberta Brown.

(iv) Extract from the Rum Creek Gazette, Dec. 11, 1916:

Mr. and Mrs. John Brown and infant daughter, Miss Ypresia Festuberta Brown, arrived on the local express yesterday afternoon. Although John still has a slight limp from the result of wounds received in action last summer he will be able to resume his tonsorial activities in the local barber shop which he operated before leaving with the First Contingent in 1914. We extend a hearty welcome to Mr. Brown and his family. They will occupy the house over the post office.

—R.M.E.

WAR

Private Smith of the Royals; the trench and a slate-black sky,
Hillocks of mud, brick-red with blood, and a prayer—halt
curse—to die.
A lung and a Mauser bullet; pink froth and a halt-choked cry.

Private Smith of the Royals; a torrent of freezing rain;
A hail of frost on a life half lost; despair and a grinding pain.
And the drip-drip of the Heavens to wash out the brand
of Cain.

Private Smith of the Royals, self-sounding his funeral knell;
A burning throat that each gasping note scrapes raw like a
broken shell.

A thirst like a red-hot iron and a tongue like a patch of Hell.

Private Smith of the Royals; the blush of a dawning day;
The fading mist that the sun has kissed—and over the hill
away
The blest Red Cross like an angel in the trail of the men
who slay.

But Private Smith of the Royals gazed up at the soft blue
sky—
The rose-tinged morn like a babe new born and the sweet
songed birds on high—
With a fleck of red on his pallid lip and a film of white on
his eye.

—HERBETT CADETT.