

MARY BRITTEN WRITES

A Second Letter to Her Sister in Canada

By SARA JEANETTE DUNCAN.

36 The Buildings,
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MY DEAR SISTER:

IN your last—enclosed in half a pound of marg., for which we are truly thankful, as it does seem worth its weight in gold these times—you remark I had not mentioned Flossie's young man before speaking of her getting rid of him, and I notice though smudged in places you would be pleased to hear the particulars. I will do my best as it is no secret and never was, and now F. herself agrees with me that a man with no chin has that much against him whatever size his eyes may be or good his hand-writing. From this you will see that F. has dropped the veil and no longer keeps herself to herself, which is a lot more agreeable all round.

The very first day of Flossie's going on the buses her father pointed out the likelihood. Says Alf, "That girl will be bringing a young man here off one of them Generals, ⁱⁿ my words," he says, and F. never denied but that was how he made her acquaintance. I believe it began with him putting her right with her change and you know how one thing leads to another when the heart is young and him a regular on her route. Soon it came to conversation and one evening, much to her surprise, he begged her to accept of a rabbit, the next day being Sunday and very tasty it was done my way with a dumpling or two and an onion. That led to the pictures, and the first thing we knew he was sitting down to tea with us and I noticed he was particularly fond of sardines. You will ask when all seemed so satisfactory why break it off and I can only tell you it has as much to do with her father as anything else. From the very first Alf thought there was something, but him being so sensitive since he was buried in France I didn't take much notice. Hard to please, Alf is now, with any stranger, which you can't blame him, seeing all he's been through and so many walking around protected.

It was Mabel began it.

"Why don't you give him a hint to cut his hair?"

she says to F., and F. replies, "I guess he's got enough to do cutting other people's," which was the first we knew of him being a hairdresser, F. not being one to tell all she knows, not by any means. She went on to pass a remark about the grapes being sour, which I needn't dwell on, sisters being sisters as the sayin' is all the world over. But Alf pricks up his ears. Alf isn't fond of hairdressers, not as a class. He says out there they're the exception and not the rule. "Well," I said, "if he was rejected on account of flat feet that wasn't his fault," I said, but Alf seemed to smell something.

Up to now, when this Mr. Pepple was there we had kept the conversation on air raids, submarines and the food controller, and I must say he expressed himself very well, though generally managing to slide the subject off on to Irene Vanbrugh or Gladys Cooper, when the details was at all horrible. He didn't seem as if he could stand them, so one evening when young George had been giving us all a regular turn with something he'd heard, this Mr. Pepple he passed his cup to change over the subject and his hand shook so it clattered in the saucer. Alf he noticed it, and presently he says to P., "What do you think about this here war?" Alf says sort of artful.

"I don't like war," says P.

"Neither do I," says Alf. "And I been there, so I know," he said. "I don't arf like war—there's a whole lot of things I like better," says Alf, "but leavin' war in general out of it, what do you think of this war?" Alf says.

This Mr. Pepple he straightened his collar behind where there wasn't nothing the matter with it and he replies:

"I don't see as this war is different from any other."

"Don't you?" says Alf. "Then you got poor eyes."

"Oh, father," says Flossie, "Mr. Pepple's eyes are his best feature."

"There's a kind of eye that's very good at reading the wrong sort of print," says Alf, "and there's

quite a few of them about just now," he says. "Now, what I ask this gentleman is: Do you consider the Huns is in the right?"

"I ain't considered it," said Mr. P.

"Oh," says Alf, "ain't you? Then may I ask what you 'ave been exercising of your mind on the last three years?"

"Suppose they ain't in the right what's that to you or me?" says P.

"If they ain't in the right they're in the wrong," Alf tells him. "And where there's a right and a wrong there's got to be a fight and always has been. We got to see it through."

"Not me," says Pepple.

"If we are going to 'Her Dream of Diamonds,' " puts in Flossie very nervous, "I don't want to hurry you, Mr. Pepple, but—"

"No," says her father, "don't hurry the young man. I understand," he said to P., "that you were rejected for flat feet."

"Flat feet, one man business, only son of a widow," says P., "and if they wanted more I could give it to them."

"Maybe you're a Pacific," says Alf.

"Maybe I am," says P.

"Maybe you're a Conchy," says Alf, and gave him a look.

"It wasn't necessary," says Pepple, "I had me flat feet."

"Had you?" says Alf. "Got 'em still?"

"Why yes," says P.

"Then use 'em," says Alf, and opened the door to him.

None of us have ever seen him since. F. thinks he takes the Tube. Alf says maybe he goes on his flat feet.

Your affectionate sister,

MARY BRITTEN.

P.S.—The present one is cross-eyed and in khaki. He gets on splendid with Alf. F. thinks his chin is his best feature. "Yes," says Mabel, "you could take a ride on it." "To Berlin," says F. You can't down our Flossie since she's been on the buses.

THE SHERWOOD FOREST

By JEAN GRAHAM.

There is no spot in England associated with more romance of fairy lore and outlaw adventure than ancient Sherwood Forest, where the trees are many centuries old and the velvet sward is softened and enriched by the dews of many summers. To the courtesy of a returned Canadian soldier, one of our boys who went "over the top" at Vimy, I am indebted for these two photographs of "the heart of Merrie England." Of course, it is of Robin Hood that we think, when we hear of this forest



WOODLAND DEPTHS OF OLD ENGLAND.

Here are seen some of the Monarchs of Sherwood Forest. These trees were considered too old for ships in the reign of Queen Elizabeth.



THE MAJOR OAK.

This wonderful old tree is about fifteen yards in circumference and twenty-two persons can stand inside it. All the limbs are supported by iron braces to the main trunk. The top of the tree was lost twenty-three years ago.

of the old land, and the words of Alfred Noyes come to us with their magic summoning of long ago scenes.

"Softly over Sherwood the south wind blows
All the heart of England hid in every rose
Hears across the green-wood the sunny whisper leap,
Sherwood in the red dawn, is Robin Hood asleep?
Hark, the voice of England wakes him as of old
And, shattering the silence with a cry of brighter gold,
Bugles in the greenwood echo from the steep,
Sherwood in the red dawn, is Robin Hood asleep?"

Where the deer are gliding down the shadowy glen,
All across the glades of fern he calls his merry men—
Doublets of the Lincoln green glancing through the May
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day—
Calls them and they answer from aisles of oak and ash
Rings the Follow! Follow! and the boughs begin to crash,
The ferns begin to flutter and the flowers begin to fly,
And through the crimson dawning the robber band goes by;

Robin! Robin! Robin! All his merry thieves
Answer as the bugle-note shivers through the leaves,
Calling as he used to call, faint and far away,
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day."

ROBIN HOOD

Robin Hood, Robin Hood, wind your horn again,
Break the Sherwood silence, call your merrie men!

Robin, England staggers, horrible in pain;
Leave your sleepy forest, thunder down the plain.

Dim your olden glory, shame your olden skill—
Trench can never stop you, bog nor barren hill!

That is Vimy Ridge there, rising from the mud;
Vimy Ridge was captured by the British blood!

Robin, Robin, Robin, summon all your men!
God and Merrie England! take the field again!

—New York Sun.