

Another Letter from "Laddie"

Written for The Western Home Monthly By Bonnycastle Dale

I THOUGHT you good folk who have dear ones at the front might like to know just what happens if the one you love gets a "Blighty." I am, unfortunately, able to tell you from sad experience.

How little, save the oft-read and treasured letters, comes back from that misty region called by the many "Somewhere in France." Before me on my desk is my share, to wit: One diary, 1916; one diary, 1917; copy of payroll; one ounce of "Krupp."

I do not name this last item in levity, far from it. I hate the sight of the crude, cruel bit of metal, but Laddie, sr., calls it his "foundry" or his "bit of Krupp." It is about an ounce in weight and three-quarters of an inch long by half an inch wide and tapers from a sharp edge to half an inch in thickness. Upon my soul I cannot give you full copy of that last diary, but I'll try to tell you what it contains, now that the lad is almost fully convalescent in Whitley Camp, England, then you can judge just what chance you have to see your own loved one back in Canada, even though he may be severely wounded, and just think, a few weeks ago we were playing politics as to whether we should send reinforcements to our war weary men. I could not for the life of me, even though I am a good Unionist, publish the facts, part of which I lay before you, but I knew then that while we were trying our best to get more of our wounded men back home that the high officers were visiting the hospitals and urging the homesick, torn-bodied

men "to hurry up and get fit again as they were needed at the front." But to the one particular case you and I are at present interested in.

One other thing I must advise. Do not, unless the first cable message tells the case positively and forbids even hope, trust to the exact wording. It is hard for the overwrought staff to give the nice details on which we distant ones build our frail hopes. Take Laddie Sr.'s case, for instance, the message read: "Seriously wounded; dangerously ill, gunshot wound in chest penetrating"—yet the same young gunner is to-day a strong, healthy man, save as I will tell you later.

We had been getting serious letters



An airship on patrol duty. This "Silver Queen" is an air craft between tug-towed sausage and the Zeppelin style, used to warn against "raiders." London bound.

from the boy (not serious enough after once I read his diary). It reads: "The trip back was a terror, there were hundreds of horses and men down everywhere, we could not trot or gallop, it was impossible to get ahead. Fritz put scores of shells in — (censored by me) — It was a hell of a place to be held up in ten seconds and we were there three or four minutes in the whine and bump of the shells—we charged through and broke clear." (That's not a bit like the dear lad's letter, just notice how our boys try to save us from worry; here's the way the letter tells it): "We were in a pretty hot corner last night, but don't worry, it's all over."

Well, he made one more trip, next day was the second attack at Vimy. He tried to go over with the gun but got a stray bit in one hand. All the men fell flat as pancakes—he really unkindly said "as flat as your pancakes"—and were then ordered to retreat. They made the "Sunken Cemetery road," and again the shells sought them out, and again the command came to "retreat to the horses." Laddie tried to make that short hurried trip, when a shell burst right ahead of him in the road. "I felt a bit of mud spatter my tunic," he writes me. Alas! It was pretty solid mud; it was that very piece of Krupp that lies before me, and the poor lad knew no more.

Next morning, when that hardy body of his had partially recovered from the shock, he actually resumed his diary, for the last time for many long weeks. He tells that "at last he has got it," of the terrible trip on the stretcher down to the dressing station, of resting in a good bed, of the pain, "but I expect to get over it O.K.—guess he will be scared



Preston's busy corner. The long way around to Moor Park on the cars.

when he sees my name in the papers." Oh! the brave boys of ours at the front, even thinking of those at home, before they are operated on.

Now comes a time of waiting for us in the Homeland, but don't be despondent, the willing ones who are appointed for this work are as anxious to let you know as you can be to receive further tidings. Two days later the chaplain of the clearing station wrote encouragingly. Imagine getting time to write a two-page letter to every wounded man's friends. God bless this kindly British race of ours. Five days later comes a letter from the Base hospital, full of cheer, again by a Church of England chaplain. (I do not mention my own church invidiously. If in this most wonderful world of ours there was more religion in the heart and less on the lips, we would not be quarreling over the name of any church.) Now comes the silence, the long wait, that is doubly hard to bear. At last Laddie Jr. comes running into camp yelling "A trench card and he wrote it himself!" Then comes another grievous waiting, when cables are not answered because they cannot be delivered, as the guns are going forward so rapidly and the wounded are scattered in the many excellent base hospitals far behind the new line. Ah, new line! That sounds good anyway.

Seventeen days, what a long time it is from sunrise to sunset, until that longed-for mail stage appears on the distant hilltop. Then comes the first letter in his own handwriting. It's all too sacred to tell about, it seems like



Laddie in his spinal carriage.

a message from the other land; as I know now he lay for many days unconscious, dangerously near the crossing over. He writes like a wee babe once more; scrawlingly, he tells how well they feed him; chicken until he is tired of it—chicken for all that long line of wounded that comes pale-faced down those many roads to these excellent hospitals, what wonderful care, what most thorough, never exhausted supplies, as Britain at this time has well up to twenty thousand wounded a week on all fronts.

Early in the war tetanus (lockjaw), gas, gangrene, and blood poisoning were common and death more so; cause—surgeon too far from the front lines. Laddie was attended to within sound of the guns, as were all the wounded at Vimy. These advanced hospitals and the new serum treatment has made a record possible of over ninety men out of every hundred almost completely restored to health within a six-month, and six per cent more good recoveries,

\$500.00 REWARD

Rewards, aggregating \$1,117.00, offered by "Canada Weekly"

Can you translate this scrap of paper?

MESSAGE SENT BY GERMAN SPY?



See
Clipping
Below

\$1,117.00
in Cash
Rewards

ARRESTS FOLLOW KITCHENER'S DEATH

(Continued from Page 1, Col. 7.)

and among the papers seized was a torn folded and worn "scrap of paper."

Inspector Donlan for the first time in his many years of service bowed his head in defeat. He was completely baffled and the hidden message of the uncanny jumble of letters remained a profound mystery.

Noted Criminologists Suggest Solutions for this Difficult Problem

Can you unravel it?

Selecting a capital letter as a starting point and counting every second or third letter until all the letters are used up would surely produce some result.—Inspector Scott.

Watson and I would procure a mirror and reflecting the "scrap of paper" endeavour to decipher the hidden message.—Sherlock Holmes.

Beginning at a selected one I should read every other letter or every third letter. I believe I should soon solve this mystery.—Arsene Lupin.

FIRST REWARD \$500.00

Ninety-Nine Other Cash Prizes

Aggregating \$1,117.00

See Big Illustrated List of Rewards—Sent Free

The first reward will be awarded to the contestant who obtains the largest number of points. For instance, 50 points can be obtained by sending in the correct answer to the mysterious message. Then there are 30 points given for general neatness, handwriting, spelling, punctuation, etc., and when you comply with the other con-

ditions and rules as below 50 points additional can be gained. 130 points is the maximum number. "Canada Weekly" (formerly Canada Monthly, established 1906), has created a great reputation for its excellent fiction, its great national articles about Canadians and things Canadian, its broad editorials

as well as for its artistic covers and illustrations and its high grade printing and general appearance.

You can help us advertise this magazine should you like it, and when you enter the contest you will be asked to write and tell if you are willing to do so.

We frankly tell you of these simple rules in advance. There is no obligation on your part to subscribe or take the magazine or spend any money in order to compete in this contest.

1 Write your solution of the mysterious message on one side of the paper only. Put your address in the upper right hand corner.

2 Boys and Girls under fourteen years of age are not allowed to compete, nor are employees of "Canada Weekly."

3 The judging of the entries in this contest will be done by three well known business men who have no connection with this firm. Prizes will be awarded according to the number of points

gained on each entry. Contest will close on 31st day of May, 1918.

4 Each competitor will be asked to show a sample copy of "Canada Weekly" to five or six friends, business associates or neighbours, to whom such a magazine will appeal and who will want to take the magazine regularly.

For these services the publishers guarantee to pay each contestant in cash or by a prize selected by him or her in advance. Such guaranteed reward will be entirely in addition to any competitive reward which may be won. Address your reply to,

Dept. 92 VANDERHOOF, SCOTT & CO., LIMITED, 35 Lombard Street, Toronto