

93 Prospect Road
Scarboro
E. Yorks
Sept 6th 1919

Dear Harry

I really ought to commence this letter with about two pages of object apology. But I will content myself with saying that I am heartily ashamed of myself for keeping you waiting so long for an answer to your two very welcome, and interesting letters.

I will let it go at that, Harry and trust to your well known good nature for forgiveness for my laxity.

Well old son; we were all just as pleased as possible to receive your first letter in May, telling us that you had arrived home safely to little Genesee after your trip to Europe on "Uncle Sam's" account. I can imagine the stir which would be created in your native borough by the return of the war worn veteran from the bloody fields of Flanders. Flags flying, bands playing, public receptions, and half the population getting crushed to death in their frantic efforts to obtain a sight of the hero of the hour. Did they carry you shoulder high to "White Springs", or did they just content themselves with taking the horses out of the carriage, and dragging you by the hand through the densely crowded streets. It sure, must have been some homecoming.

But joking apart, boy, it must have felt good to you to be home once again.

We had often wondered where you had got to; as I only heard once from you after you went to France; and we were most agreeably surprised to get our next letter from "God's own Country" with the Genesee postmark.

By the way I never see the name of your home town, but what I think of the dope shop at Beverley, and our doing night work there in company. You will perhaps remember that I used to warble that well known little ditty to you "Way down in Genesee". And it seemed to me to hit you square between the eyes too.

Well, I suppose you will be wanting to hear something about myself, and my belongings. I am pleased to be able to tell you that my wife is in the best of health, and has quite settled to civilian life again. She often speaks of you, and of the old Beverley days and I might mention that your photograph occupies a prominent position on the wall opposite to where I am writing at present. It is not my wife's fault that I have not written before, as she tells me about it at irregular intervals every week, and has several times threatened to take the job on herself, if I didn't get along with it.

The boys are both fine, and Norman is still doing well at school. He finished up last term at the head of his class.

Taking first prizes for science, mathematics, and scripture, also passing (with honors) in drawing.

He also sat for the Cambridge University local examination; the results of which has not yet been published.

Geoff of course is only a little chap yet, who thinks more about getting down to the sea-shore to play with his chums than anything else.

As regards myself, I am in fine form but have put on a tremendous lot of flesh since being "demobbed". When I left the army in March last; I weighed 144 lbs. I have been weighed again today, and pulled down 177 lbs. This is simply awful you know, and I shall really have to do something about it. I am beginning to look like an animated push-ball, and the wife is ashamed to walk out with me I think the best thing I could do would be to come out to Idaho, and try for a job on your ranch. I think about 11 hours a day, ploughing, seeding, and harvesting, for a year would just about put my waist-line in to proper place again.

I must congratulate you on your good fortune in taking over your father's place. As we say in England, you are "made up". Which means, that your bread is buttered on both sides for life. Of course I know it means hard work. But to you, that is nothing, for I never yet came across a man who was such a glutton for work as yourself, and I should think (if you go about farming, as you did about sailmaking) ten years will see you with enough funds in hand to do the European trip in style, along with Mrs. Lorang. But, whether it is in ten or twenty; don't forget that Jimmie lives on a little island off of the mainland of Europe.

In looking over first letter I think that the only thing that I need comment upon is your love of souvenirs. I have tried everywhere to get someone to ship it to you, but until this last week, without success. I am in touch with a firm now that I think will do the business for us.

If not, the only alternative will be to send it by Government parcels post. The unfortunate part about that method is, that they will not accept any package over eleven pounds weight. This of course would mean that I should have to open your box, and make two or more packages of it. I would not dream of doing this without your express permission. I think I need not tell you that I have no desire to pry into your private affairs, or personal belongings, but, if the firm I am now in touch with turns me down, I do not know how I am going to get the things across to you otherwise.

Anyway, Harry, when you write again will you please say whether you object to me opening the box as a last resort, if everything else fails. You may rest assured that I will send it just as you entrusted it to me if at all possible.

Now as regards a few of the boys of the 72nd Squadron whom you knew at Beverley. So far I know they are all demobilized except a very few who elected to stay for another year. Flight Palmer is still at Beverley. Sergt Roshes (Carpenters) was at Driffield last time I heard of him. Sergt Blackburn is demobbed, and back at his old trade (upholstery) at Dewsbury. Cpl Cooper is also a "civvie". He is back in London. All the girls were still in uniform the last time I heard of anything about them. They were sent from Beverley to Driffield. There is a great outcry in the country about the government still keeping the women in the army, wasting money and food, and clothes, to no purpose.

But as usual without success. They have parted with the men far quicker than the women, though, why the lord knows for you and I know that they never were any good even at their best.

It may be of interest to you if I say a few words as to the state of things in England now we have peace (save the mark) with us once again.

Well; Harry boy, things are not so very rosy with us. We have strikes and lockouts every other week. Wages are high but the cost of living higher still.

I will give you a few instances.

Let us start on breakfast first. Bacon before the war ranged from 6^d to 10^d (12 to 20 cents) per pound. It is now (good bad or indifferent) 2/6 per lb. (60^c) Eggs are 5^d (10^c) each. Pre war prices 24^c a dozen. Bread is 9 1/2^d a 4 lb. loaf. Pre war 4^d, Jam 1^s/4^d per lb. Pre-war 3^d to 6^d. Tea is the only thing which is about the same price as before viz. 2^s/8^d a lb.

When we come home to dinner we eat meat at 1^s/10^d (44^c) a lb. pre-war 6^d to 10^d, Potatoes at 2 1/2^d a lb. pre-war 7^d for 14 lbs.

Butter is 2^s/6^d a lb pre-war 1^s/2^d. Lard 2^s/-pre war 6^d.

Fruit has been selling at enormous prices this season. Strawberries at their cheapest realized 1^s/9^d a lb. Cherries 2^s/-, Plums 1^c/6^d, Apples 9^d, Peaches 1^s/6^d each, Pineapples 8^s/6^d each.

Green peas (in the pod) 6^d a lb, cauliflowers 8^d to 11- each.

Coal is nearly £3.0^s 0^d a ton, and firewood £5.0.0. The pre-war prices of coal was from 16^s/6^d to £1.4.0 a ton, and wood you could get for any old price, as people did not use it

for fuel; having always plenty of coal. Now we are restricted to 112 lbs. a week per house, and have much difficulty to procure even that allowance.

The reason of the shortage of fuel is chiefly, that the miners cannot make up their minds that they want.

The mine-owners, and the government have granted them concession after concession, until their wages are up miles above pre war rates, and they are only working 7 hours per day. Still they are not satisfied, and are now clamoring for a 6 hour day, and a little more money. Wages in general have gone up considerable though not in proportion to the increased cost of living.

Plumbers, painters, and joiners, are now receiving 1^s/9^d (42^c) per hour, the pre-war rate being about 10^d (20^c)

Even the street sweepers are up to £3.0^s.0^d per week from £1.5.0, so that this class of men (unskilled) are really, really receiving greater wagger proportionately than anyone else.

But I could go on with my tale of woe indefinitely. Everything is at sixes and sevens, and production is at its lowest ebb. The cry of thee moment seems to be "Grab all you can, and do as little as possible for it."

On top of this; the government is still spending at the rate of about 5 ½ million pounds per day, so that one way or another, we seem to be heading straight for the rocks.

In short, Harry; England is a grand place to be out of at present. DO you want a good man at "White Springs"? Eats for work!

But lets leave this dismal subject and talk about something to eat.

I was pleased to hear that you have had such a bumping crop all round this year. Your letter was most interesting to me, and made me wish that I was with you for a while helping to gather in goodly harvest. By Heck! Old son, if you could first just dump your little lot over here; your father would realize five times 6000 Dollars: – But as the Irishman said to the priest when he (the priest) was telling him about the wonderful prices he could have got for his produce in London. "Sure and that's true your reverence; and if I could take a bucket of water down to Hell I could get a guinea a draft for it." And all this is to be yours, next year. The land, and the water, and all the fullness therof. Well I congratulate you most sincerely, and hope with all my heart that you, and the lady who is so soon to share you name, and all your worldly goods, may have your full share of happiness, and prosperity, and be spared for many, many years to enjoy it.

By the way, you did not send us a photo of your new Bungalow. Next time you go shooting with your Kodak just turn it in that direction, and slip the results across to us.

Thank you very much for the two bunches of photographs you sent us. We were all greatly interested in them. The one of Genesee Main Street got us going some. What a rip-snooting, slap-bang up-to-the-minute, four horse city it must be. We were transformed in the twinkling of an eye to the "movies", and peopled your Main Street with William S. Hart, and his crowd of cow-punchers; and could see them riding like a tornado down the street, and shooting everything and everybody up.

We liked your photographs of "White Springs" immensely. They sure do look good, and a home to be proud of. The fountain is quite a work of art; and it is rather hard to believe that it is the work of amateur craftsmen. (Not that I doubt your word for a moment Harry.)

Just a few words as to how it feels to be a free man once again after three years as a slave.

Of course I have got a bit used to the feeling now, but when I first "got out", it felt simply great. It used to gall my spirit like hell to have to bow and scrape, and salute, and "sir" any young Jackanapes who happened to have a star on his sleeve, many of them probably no better than myself either socially, or intellectually. And when I knew that it was no longer necessary I used to strut along, and look straight at every officer I came across and say "How do mate". Then the feeling that I was home for good, and that I should have no more guards to do, at any blinkin' sergeants or corporals coming along, and shouting "Come here that man". "What are you on?" Well: that was simply it.

Then to have home life, instead of barracks; good food, and properly cooked, and a thousand and one things which are necessary to a man's comfort and manliness, but which are denied the soldier. It was just like a little heaven to me.

However, that's all over and done with now, and I hope that by the time the next war comes along I shall be about 120 years old, and heading fast for Heaven...

Well! boy: I think this ought to do for one effort, so I will ring down the curtain. I hope that by this time next week, your box of "doings" will be on its way to you. I will drop you a line as soon as I get it off, and then you will have an idea when to expect it. Please give our kindest regards to your fiancé, and tell her that although we have never seen her in the flesh we still wish her everything that's good for the sake of the "Doughboy" whom we do know.

To you we also send out best respects and kindest wishes for your welfare and prosperity, and I hope you will not keep me too long waiting for another letter.

Your sincere friend

Jimmie Augus