No. 1 Canadian Stationary Hosp.
British Mediterranean Expd. Force.
Oct. 8th 1915

Letter No. 25.

Dear Mother,

Although I sent a few lines to Muriel the other day, am afraid it will reach Montreal very much a head of this, for in spite of having a letter box within 2 minutes walk from our tent, didn't get it posted until last p.m. There are one or two officers who will censor our letters for us personally without reading them & naturally we prefer this to having them remain open for the public-censor, consequently frequently have

that a day or so yet, before we can get the right man at the right moment, tho I have been in bed since Monday have had that same else do this work for me. I don't know just what the trouble has been not diarrhoea, but some slight infection, causing headache, backache, & a small temp.— Beyond feeling absolutely rotten however it is nothing serious. To-day my headache left me & with it the Temp. so expect to be up again to-morrow. Many of the girls have had it & Major Williams seems to think it is caused by the sudden relief of the heat. etc. etc. tho' long a tale to go on

to when there are more interesting things to write about. It comes quickly & leaves as the same way.

Well I think it was last Saturday I sent you my last. We had 3 mighty hot & terribly busy days. Sunday night I came off with my head just splitting, a tired & dazed look & was told to stay off on Monday & Tuesday as I say been back at duty since. It's been mighty nice having Mildred here with me in the tent, for naturally where nurses are so scarce, & our Matron such a woman, one sick over-showered with attention. Mildred is not mentioning anything to her family at all

about feeling & rather having been sick, for she is feeling much better, has been up & around the tent the past two days, is to get dressed this afternoon, & I do hope her troubles are over. But the dear Loca (not dysentery) has been so persistent, Major Williams says she must be careful & go slowly. Imagine it will be this weeks t. morrow since she went to bed! I shall be so thankful when we both have the time & energy to go for a walk beyond the hospital lines, for it is now five weeks since we have been outside our tent or Ward, & am so apt to get a little tiffed, especially where

in our sense our work is so depressing & unsatisfactory. The men are so ill & so miserable, we have such a scarcity of not only supplies but orderlies & nurses, that it makes work most difficult; & yet when one stops & thinks about it we really are one & all very happy in our work, & it is a satisfaction in knowing how much worse off they would be without us. But how they all pour souls long for England, or some land where food is plentiful & not all canned, where the sun is less penetrating, water less of a luxury.

Mrs Mitchie has arrived at

last in full uniform & with the rank of a C.A.M.C. nurse, with her Mrs Cosgrave, wife of the Col. of No 3 Gen. Stat. Hosp; needless to say it makes us all mad to think of any un-professional being given the same rank, for it certainly is not fair, although we all realize in this instance it was a means to an end — but if ever anyone had suffered for breaking regulations this Highlander. Mrs Cosgrave arrived to find that her husband had left the same day for England, with but small chance of living until he reached this. She is still here, waiting to get "invalided" home, which is taking some time — but it is the only way it can be managed.

Shirley arrived by the same boat, to hear for the first time (don't know what happened to her cables) how ill her husband had been, naturally got an awful shock on seeing him, & that he was to return as soon as possible, which means of course she wants to go with him of course will, but of ~~course~~ all sorts of complications have arisen, which although the end will out in the end, shows what a mistake the attempt has been. I really feel awfully sorry for her, no doubt under the same circumstances would have done likewise.

The darling part is had they not been married, both husbands being well cared have sent for their wives immediately they would have been made much of, given every consideration etc – whereas now they are here under very different conditions, though the hunt itself, has made it as comfortable as possible for them.

Well to get away from our surroundings for a little while – Am so glad you met & liked Bunty Thomson. Certainly he & Temple seem to think a great deal of

are another, & that type of friends life is always good especially for boys.

To me it seems wonderful that Mrs Cummings is still alive, but rather dreadful that she should under-go another operation, for I should think the end cannot be very far off, & it seems so much useless suffering. No doubt

As you can tell by the change in writing I was interrupted a few words back, since when we have had another experience to add to our list, & made us realize that things are never so bad but they might be worse. It is now Tuesday 10th, a

Lake Ener. Dec. 10

& when writing before, the first interruption was our evening meal. As I mentioned before I was feeling rather weak but otherwise much better, but was still in bed. As it was a dull rainy damp (in fact started to rain about 5 p.m.) afternoon, Mildred who was up for the first time & dressed, thought it wiser not to go down to the Mess Tent for dinner, so had Tea with me. We had scarcely finished, when the rain began to come down in torrents, & the wind to blow like mad, so that we could scarcely hear ourselves speak — because we had our

"Brought to mention in the Dispatches, & received a warm letter from Lord Kitchener"

lantern, as it is quite dark here now by 6.30 p.m.

Suddenly one side of the tent flapped ferociously, the lantern flared, & before we cared speak a large improvised shelf, about 6 ft in length, containing <u>all</u> our drinks, extras in the food line, boots, hold-alls, toilet articles, cigarettes, in fact most of our every day articles of all descriptions, piloted forward on the ground, spilling eau-de-cologne, broken watch, whiskey, gin, clock & luitlands watch in one conglomerate mass; our wash-stand in its excitement joined the mess, which is a

a basin & bucket full;
I called madly for rubber-
boots, & hurried landed
one gone, waist-high & sou-
wester & in about 2 seconds
we were out in the gale,
beyond our tent flopped
& landed on top of the
debris — It takes much
longer to write about than it
took to happen, & we kept falling
on "Lane" had been
entirely destroyed! Number
of us had been pulling up
drunk, & the out look on
life when we reached our
Recreation Tent was a
mighty sad one. The floor of
the latter was swimming
with rain water — but we found

a chair ~~sat~~ down very
probably wondered what
would happen next.

In a few moments the
storm was over, a gang of
men sent to the rescue, who
really I think did more harm
than good by tramping in & out
the ~~our~~ tents that had broken
down the frame.

Our jaeger blankets got
wetter wet, but otherwise
our beds were dry, so the time
were renewed along with
our others to the Recreation
tent where 6 of us slept, in
this dank, damp, smelly
place, tightly laced all
round, as the wind was

still blowing hard, & they
didn't want it to get
under-neath. The place full
& overflowing with wet clothes
of every kind & description.
<u>Never</u> shall I forget the
smell!!

In the a.m. as soon as the
sun came out, nothing
looked quite so bad or so
desperate, though I must
admit it was a long
dreary day. ~~Col.~~ Major
Williams decided instead of
erecting the tents to move us
all down to some canvas-huts
put up & used for wet-weather
patients. These had to be
scrubbed, when the sun

began, as always confusion
& general dissatisfaction;
many were not informed
of the move, their things
picked up, & unused
generally – the heat was
awful – I felt miserable &
spent the day sitting
around in bed-room slippers
& loose wrapper, unable
to move & he descent, not even
feeling like it. Guildred was
somewhat on the mend &
shuffled around, looking
after our things, for unless
you keep your hands on
your own goods, some body
else grabs them.

About four p.m. or perhaps
a little earlier I went down

& after doing a few odds & ends went to bed, feeling I spent the happiest day in my life.

Major Williams came in the p.m. to see us both & I begged to get up to-day, but he insisted on ~~either~~ both of us staying in bed for one more day, so you see we have a Canadian man looking after us. I really think he is wise, for of course all our work is amongst dysentery patients & so much depends on our being in good condition, & mind he won't let us start in too soon.

The huts we are in now are right near the new hospital, & look like little paper boxes, & as hot in the day time as ladies. They are single canvas portable huts, & I should say no credit to anyone! However do I think it wise to have moved us, & once at work we are in them to bath during the day, that the heat doesn't matter, for of course the nights are always cool.

Each one contains four small windows, mica being used instead of glass, with door at one end. The wall on either side can be un-hinged & opened, but one has to be careful in

Cure of wind. These huts are 16 ft by 6, not a great deal of room by the time our bed is in, trunk (the latter cannot be shoved under the bed owing to cross-bars) dunnage bag, box for wash stand various coats, but enough for one. Mildred & I have decided to have beds & wash stand in one & one sink in the other. Jack knew how it will work out in wet weather, the huts being about 8 ft. apart, but in the mean-time we're going to try it.

What would ever have become of us if providence

had not been good enough to send the sun after the rain I hate to think.

Well we have had our experience of the much talked of gales on Lemnos, & it certainly was thick if not sweet. They say there is much worse in store for us, but we hope to be better prepared.

These huts are really only a temporary abode for us, for I believe wooden huts have been planned for us, so no doubt there will be another move before long; but such is military life evidently, one continual move,

everything done un-expectedly,
usually confusion, & as
many as possible kept in
ignorance of what is doing,
for no reason whatever,
consequently sows &
dissatisfaction, & our Chairman
is the kind who causes
more victims instead of
help smoothing over little
difficulties that arise. I
simply mention that as
this subject, it is too
complicated a one, but I do
very much regret not
being able to tell Shirley
just how matters stand,
for I am confident she
has poisoned both Col. McKee
& the Prince against the

nurses & quite unjustly, but earlier imagine at present it would be most unwise to discuss the question at present, though I did stay, once home I would have more to tell her.

Will to go back to your letter. I left off I think with Mrs Cummings.

I am looking forward so much to hearing all about yr. trip to Kennebunk, & do so hope you will have fine weather.

Was quite surprised to hear you had a visit from Jamie Cunningham for had no idea she was in Montreal; also Helen's Strachs engagement

was un-expected. Can't imagine what her mother will do without her. By the way I sent her a few lines of congratulation, but in the excitement the other mighth it got lost, & don't know whether someone else picked it up & posted it or not. Am afraid I won't get another written, so you mighth mention it sometime. Another mail just came in, but rather a small one. I got just one letter from Miss Arnold, in ~~answer~~ answer to mine written soon after arriving, to bring her to send me a few odds

sends back for myself & for the men. Before leaving England she wrote saying to be sure & send to her if I wanted anything & especially asked if the men I was working for, were short of anything in particular she would so much like to send, & took her at her word, & had such a nice reply. The parcel will probably arrive some days later.

Well dear I have had many interruptions since it is 8 p.m. the Colonel is going & we are about to settle down for the night

Since 4.30 it has been gorgeous, but rather tedious it gets dark so quickly, for at 6.30 it is night, & quite cold. Sitting up in bed one has to have a shawl or over one's shoulder — it seems so queer after the intolerable heat of the day, for from 10 a.m. till 4 p.m. one cannot get away from the sun.

We have just made up our minds that these huts are an exact duplicate of our child hoods old Noah's Ark, only the door instead of being in the middle, is a little to the th. But the roof going up a little, & the ⊿ at the ends, & oblong ~~cuph~~ shape are identical.

Will just say good-night & add a line in the a.m. Our letters are only collected once daily at 4 p.m.

Dec. 11th a.m.

Another day of bright sunshine, am up, dressed & feeling much more like my own self.

Mildred has just written to her sister & tells me she mentioned having been sick but that it was all over, so it doesn't matter much what you say.

I don't think I have ever told you so frequently, ~~with~~ when the wind is in the

with direction, can hear the big guns up at the front, & occasionally hear a few go off in the night much nearer, this must be more or less chance ones.

It is surprising how near this at the front sound sometimes.

We have just heard the rumour that a big hospital ship is in the harbour (with mention names) & if so in all probability Col. & Mrs Bricke will depart on her. If so intend asking the latter to post this in England, for we are sure you will get it far more quickly, & then

it will not be censored.
If you could get just one glimpse at my hair I know I would have your sympathy. It is strength as can be, only & pretty in every way, & yet I dread more than words can tell the thought of washing it. I believe before long the sisters are to be allowed a sawyer shed for their own use. They are just a large round affair, in the lower part of which wood or fuel can be burnt, & the upper part is a huge sort of bowl arrangement for water. The thought of having warm water brought in at night is indeed a luxury.

Well dear I didn't mean to commence another page. I seem to have written such volumes about to little. I often wonder if in the end you get really any idea of what the place work actually is – I don't think it would be possible to exaggerate it.

Good-bye once again. Love to Uncle. I can quite understand it must be a relief to him to have the matter really settled instead of waiting & wondering when his commission would come. No matter what happens the boy will be happier for having done what

he has, but of course if he is one of the unfortunates he will be the one supper.

But if only one could be out here & see the type they are sending back, supposedly well, one can't help but feel the healthier ones at home should be taking their place.

I seem to be able to write endlessly.

Good-bye & always love to you dear from Lucie.

(Laura Hoeland.)