

THE MEADOW,
GROSVENOR ROAD,
READING.

Jan: 31st 1915

Beloved Mary,

It seems ages since I heard from you, how much I wish you were within reach, letters seem to get more & more of a mockery in this war time, it is so impossible to give expression to one's thoughts & experiences by writing, even if time allowed one to try to. The war seems to stretch back so long & to almost obliterate former things so that one thinks of the old peaceful time when one was happy and did nice interesting things & went to lovely places as if it was all part of a

put the little girls to school & himself go to the W.O., get into something as he says he is and 4/1 and really just at his best & border was all through the Boer War. It will be so awfully nice to see him again dear boy & will be such a relief to have him back home for a bit. Write soon & tell me all your news. This has been a dreadful winter for

Warmed love & thoughts down Nam
My friend & her
I am cold. as I write its snowing fast.

dream, or of a life lived long ago on some happier star.

You would be surprised to hear that Rit is married, ~~his~~ three weeks yesterday since her wedding. I dare say you never even heard of her engagement, as it only lasted 5 weeks. He is now a 2nd lieutenant in the Royal Field Artillery, but used to be a professional singer. Ivan Furth by name, she has known him for the last 4 years in a way as he used to come to her to be coached when training his voice (which is a beautiful baritone) and he

has been in love with her for quite 3 years, but she never fancied him at all & only laughed at him; he went off for a tour through India & Egypt with his sister & some other professional musicians; and only came back when war began. He enlisted in the R.F.A. & with the friends soon got his commission & was thrust of straight in the Army as his profession. When he met Rit again her feelings changed I suppose, and he persuaded her to accept him; the next thing was that the regiment was ordered to be front so he was very keen on having a "war wedding" and as she concurred they were married at 2 days notice, in a great hurry. However as it turns out Ivan was left behind as Base officer to clear up the details after the regiment left, so he & Rit are in quarters at

Leamington now: but of course don't know
how long he may be there. Ivan is a
very distinct character: extremely masterful
and having a way of getting things he
wants; full of energy and extremely
successful socially. He is interesting
because he is so full of life & absolute
youthful cheeks & sp. & selfishness;
His father is a Dr at Faversham, & his
mother is half Irish, & Ivan has a
big bit of his mother in him. He has
about 2 sisters, one of whom is a
surgeon too. It will be very interesting
to see what effect these two will
have on each other's characters:

I am glad Rut has married, as she
always wanted to, & had she not
done so now I think would have
been an unhappy woman. It is nice
too that the girls have the same art in their lives

day. we see a good
 deal of them as they
 are brought in here if
 any accidents occur
 n. day one faints, also
 for hot tea on cold
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 ordinary Tommy
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 The Dr.
 who is our
 neighbour has
 one son a
 prisoner in
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(2)

As an interest, it may come
 in very usefully as they have
 very little money. his family not
 being at all well off, so they will
 have to begin very carefully, and
 Mr. I fear is not quite cut out for
 a poor man's wife. being rather
 a spoiled young woman up to now.
 It seems strange to think of her as
 "Mrs. Ivan Firth" doesn't it?

I was a fortnight in the Berks County
 Hospital in the Xmas vac: doing
 a real training. I was very interested

Older who has just
left school is now
in the Berles
regiment.

My cousin
Herbert Hastings
a Major in the
Middlesex. has
been out at the
front 5 months
now, & has had
no leave yet.

Walter is coming
home from the
Argentine in April
as he is fearfully
keen to get a commission

He has been trying all this time, & now can bear it no longer. So is buying his family home & going to

but sad work: of course I simply
ranted as a probationer and
did ward work, cleaning, bedmaking,
washing patients etc, and attended
the outpatients at the surgery. There
one got lots of experience dressing every
kind of injury, wounds, cuts, machinery
accidents, awful abscesses & sores &
poor wretched babies & mothers. We
had 50 wounded soldiers too in
one ward, most of them with very
interesting things to tell. all so cheerful

over their wounds, but none really
wanted to return. He had suffered
too much & had more than enough
of horrors, squalor, dirt, cold & misery
to honestly wish to return to it. There
seems nothing great or magnificent about
modern war, science has reduced it
to a cold-blooded butchery which
revolts human feeling. It is just
calculated brutality, that's all.

I used to go on when the night nurses
came off. so that I went getting up
at 5-30 to get there in time from here
so in that cold weather & dark morning
it was rather a strain. still I liked
the work & it was a complete change
as there was no brain work or
responsibility required in probationer's

work.

We have hardly any of our Staff left now at College, every man suitable or unsuitable almost has departed so we who are left are just "carrying on" as we best can, taking on the work of those who have gone. There are still plenty of students of a sort women & younger men below the military age. Reading & all around is now darkened every night, no more allowed to show lights & all the street lights are darkened above so that the whole town is dark. This is for fear of Zeppelins, but most people think they would not dare to come so far inland. The field in front of our house is all cut up into trenches, as the Reading Contingent of Kitchener's Army drill there every

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You would be surprised to hear that RL is married, in three weeks yesterday

since her wedding. I dare say you never overheard of her engagement, as I only dated 5 weeks. He is now

at 2nd Lieutenant in the Royal Field

Artillery, but used to be a professional singer. Joan Smith by name, she

has known him for the last 4 years in a way as he used to come later to

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Warmest love & thoughts dear Mary

your friend & brother

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When he met RL & again he felt changed & as if he had been ordered to "frat" her to accept him; he next day was that the regiment was ordered to the front so he was very keen on having a "war wedding" and as she concerned they were married at 2 day notice, in a great hurry. However as I turn out Joan was left behind as Base Officer to clean up the detail after the regiment left, so he & RL are in quarters at