

CENTRAL QUEENSLANDERS IN ENGLAND.

LETTER FROM MRS. H. G. WHEELER.

Mrs. H. G. Wheeler, writing from London, on the 14th of June to Miss M. S. Trotman, says:—

"Since writing to you last, the great naval battle has been fought, and so many of our brave sailor boys have gone, but they fought splendidly, and our navy still rules the sea. Then came the dreadful tidings about Lord Kitchener. It was horrible to hear the newsboys calling it out. It seemed to stun us, and we gazed at each other in despair. A little girl in a hairdresser's shop said to me 'We are like children who have lost a good father,' and indeed we have lost a great leader, one whom it will be difficult to replace.

"On Saturday, the 3rd of June, I saw Sergeant-major Gower at Harefield. He had leave from Weymouth and was visiting some Australians who were wounded in their billets in France. He and Private McDonald, of Lake's Creek, had tea with me at the canteen. Privates Franklyn and Cornick are at Harefield. Two Russians, Sholmatoff and Jank, who came from Mount Morgan, are also there, and they were quite excited when they heard I was from Rockhampton. I also saw Sergeant Colin Carden and Harry Leeke.

"Unfortunately, owing to the illness of my daughter Portia, I have not been able to visit the hospitals or go to the Buffet for over a week.

"Jack Atherton tells me that Bert Hamilton was over on leave from France. Ken Henderson called last week to say good-bye, and I have since had a card telling me of his safe arrival in France. Jack Henderson wrote in very good spirits. His letter was dated the 5th of June, and they were going into billets again after several days in the trenches. I have also heard from Driver James Wallace since he returned to France. He enjoyed his leave and finds it difficult to settle down to work again.

"Private Bernard Pearson, writing on the 5th of June from 'Somewhere in France,' said he had received the socks and 'Capricornians' and asked me to thank the kind people at home who had sent them. He says that all the Rockhampton boys in the battalion at present are 'in the very best nick' and 'ready for Fritz when he comes along.'

"Barney Bromley is still at Weymouth. He was very disappointed that he was

not sent to France with the last draft when Leslie Fraser went.

"I hear from my sister-in-law that sixty pairs of socks have arrived at Eastbourne. That will be the forty pairs from Lake's Creek and twenty pairs from the Sock and Soldiers' Comforts Fund.

"I have written to Chaplain Lundy for a list of men from Rockhampton and suburbs in his battalion and I will send the men socks, cigarettes, games, and 'Capricornians' as soon as I hear from him.

"I had a reply to my letter to Private G. Armstrong, Matcham. He was very surprised and pleased to receive my letter and papers. Percy Longworth is at Wey-

mouth and will probably have light duties on the staff there. I saw Mr. Orrock yesterday. He is very well and still at 72 Victoria-street. I often see Norman Parker at Horseferry-road. Bill Rudd, looking very well, was in at the Buffet.

"The Egyptian mail brought a nice long letter from Peter Stuart, dated the 24th of May. He seems very well and hoped soon to be in France. He told us how Norman Fox died. He lived for nine hours after the accident. Peter was with him most of the time. Peter feels very keenly the loss of a comrade who was with him all through that never-to-be-forgotten time on the Peninsula.

"Our boys are doing well in France. There was a report in yesterday's paper that they had taken a trench and several German prisoners. This evidently happened some days ago, as the men who took part in it are now in England on leave and were entertained on Tuesday at the Buffet.

"Sister Beryl Campbell is leaving for Australia and will pass through Rockhampton on her way to Kilburnie.

"Another mail has just arrived bringing me a letter from Miss Spilsbury, Hon. Secretary of the Sock and Soldiers' Comforts Fund, enclosing £5 to be spent on our boys. For this I am most grateful and feel sure the Committee will not mind if occasionally I give £1 of this fund to Mrs. Rattigan, manageress at the Buffet, to provide fruit and extras for our dear lads coming over from the trenches. These are the men who have been on the Peninsula all the time and in Egypt where comforts and extras were few, and they deserve all we can give them. It is a great joy to the lads to find a comfortable

deserve all we can give them. It is a great joy to the lads to find a comfortable club where Australians are waiting to welcome them at any hour of the day or night. One of our members gives each man the address of a boarding-house or hotel to stay at for the night. One of the men told me that I was the first English-speaking woman he had met since he left Australia eighteen months ago."