

May 1915

In a world of turmoil there is no better comfort than our family. But what comfort is there when the family is amid the turmoil? At the outbreak of war Walter Dyer and his son James left Brandon to fight in Flanders. Walter, of Town Street, is in a Portsmouth hospital recovering from wounds to his thigh and arm. His son has been missing since that first month of war, but there are suspicions he was killed and until his body is found then officially he is “missing”.

Then there is Emily Carter. Her husband passed away about ten years ago and the family moved from their flint knapping business on London Road to a farm on Broomhill, just past the railway station toward Weeting. Emily's sons are also involved in the fighting. Albert has been in the army ten years already and is in France holding off the Germans. Edward, better known as Ted, joined up at the outbreak of war and is expecting to go to France once his training is finished. Harry emigrated to Canada some time ago to work on farms out there, but then war interrupted all that. Last month he returned to these shores with the Canadian Force and also expects to go to France very soon. Leonard, also a career soldier, went over in the first week of fighting. He was killed last October. A fifth son, Jack, suffers from deafness and the army will not take him on account of this. He is adamant that he is able to fight and keeps trying to enlist, against his mother's wishes I am sure.

Emily has daughters married to men in the fighting. Mildred was sadly widowed when her husband died of fever in Africa, Beatrice's husband is in the Bedford Regiment and Ethel recently married a Brandon lad in the Lancers, Robert Bullock. To top it all off, Emily has a sister and brother who also have sons fighting in the war. So you can understand why Emily gets a bit apprehensive when the postman comes knocking. However, today he brings a letter from her son Albert.

“I am sure you must feel proud of your sons when you think of them all fighting for the rights of their people and country, and although it will cause lamentable losses amongst those we love so dear, we must be of good cheer, and look upon everything that happens as being for the best. I received a letter from Jack to say he was having another try for the Army, and I hope he has been successful this time, as although he may not be able to come out here, his services will be quite useful at home.”

“We are having some pretty stiff fighting at present, and I don't think it will be long before the Germans are sorry that they started this game. You seem anxious that this war should finish early. Well for my part, I only hope they will keep at it until our enemies are completely crushed once and for all. It is far better that we should fight to a finish now than to stop half way, and then have to start over again in a year or two's time.”

Will this provide the comfort that Emily so sorely seeks? At least it proves that Albert is safe. However tomorrow carries no guarantee.