

Dinan, Brittany
Aug 8th 1906

Dearest Anna,

We have been taking it quietly for a day or two here - speaking comparatively - and have taken advantage of our stay to get some of our photos developed and some printed. Bernard brought them in a little while ago and we are both delighted with the results. The little camera which I brought must have a very good lens, judging from the pictures obtained thus far. The whole country here is crying out for rain and they say that there has not been any ~~sun~~ for 6 weeks. The dust on all the roads is dreadful and we have not had one wet day since we came to this side of the Atlantic. Probably, however, the conditions will be reversed in the part of the country where we are going and where the climate is said to be very like that on the west coast of Ireland. We arrived here just in time for the horse-races, something in which, as you know, I have always taken a great interest. However, we have had a fine opportunity of seeing the people of the town, but the men, women & children who have come in from the surrounding country to see the races and enjoy the fêtes which have been going on every evening - illuminations, dances, &c. There is a marked difference between the people here (the Bretons) and those of Normandy. In Normandy stout people are common though the average height is by no means so great as in England. Here, however, the people are much smaller in every way; and of different appearance, as might be expected from their Celtic origin. Of this origin they are very proud and I am told that many of them resent being called French. The last few evenings we have heard many of their quaint chansons and seen something of their dances. Our coming here at this time

was purely a matter of chance as we had heard nothing about the festivities. We encountered Miss Dickson here - who used to be at the R. V. C. and then came over to London to continue her study of music. The holiday time she is spending in Dinan by way of improving her knowledge of French and I believe she is taking singing lessons from some swell in the musical line here. I fear that her studies have been somewhat interfered with by the arrival of on the scene of B. G. H. who has been out for several walks with her. This morning they went out to pick blackberries. On Monday afternoon we took her with us to the races and altogether I think she has been very glad to see brother Canadians. I know very little about the girl, but believe that her people live on Mackay Street in Montreal. She went to the High School in Paris time and is evidently one of his many admirers.

The account which you sent me of Arnprior is discouraging and makes one not very enthusiastic about his going there. Certainly it is not a place where there is much going on that is improving or stimulating. But then, where else could he go? I sometimes think that I should like to keep him in Montreal, but fear that office work there would not do for him. As to Arnprior, different friends said to me before I left home that they considered it a great chance; but of course they knew little of the conditions. [B. has improved much in manner and every day seems to take a keener interest in what he sees and in studying the guide book. Whenever there is anything that he wants particularly to see I always make a point of being interested in the same thing - even if it is not a thing specially interests me.

Returning to Dinan I may say that it is a nice little town with a population of about 11,000, including quite a number of English residents, though the proportion of the latter has been falling off considerably of late years. We met a man named

Dear - a retired officer I believe, as he was all through the boxer difficulty in China - a day or two ago who has had his family here for four years in order that they might become thoroughly familiar with French and also get a fair amount of education in other ways. There is a "high class ladies' school" here, "presided over by Miss F. L. McCullum, assisted by a large staff of certificated mistresses, and by visiting professors." The climate here is said to be very healthful and living comparatively cheap.

To-morrow we intend to go down the Rance by boat to St. Malo a distance of about 18 miles, to return later in the day by train and then to go the following morning to Brest where there are on ^{an} average 160 wet days in each year and where we may therefore hope to escape dust with which we seem to be saturated at present. Brest is the principal naval port in France and is very strongly fortified. It was for a long time held by the English but in 1397 was restored to the French by Richard II. After that many attempts to retake it ^{were made} by the English, but they never succeeded in doing so; nor had they any right to succeed for the town should belong to France.

Everywhere we encounter soldiers and one begins to realize the enormous expense of keeping up these great armies. Here in Dinan practically all the soldiers seem to be dragoons and in Juyigne they are the best men that we have seen in France. They continue to wear brass helmets with a long horse's ~~tail~~ tail at the back which is far from ornamental and which is of no use for keeping off flies as there is no machinery for working it.

Vaughan tells me of the new appointments to the Board of Governors - Clouston, Hay & Repard. I fear that in some quarters these all these names will not be greeted with applause. They

should have put on at least one man with a knowledge of University matters. V. tells me also that there is no probability of Mrs. Flux recovering. It is awfully sad for them both. I think he is very much attached to her and as there are no children he will be a very lonely man. I have heard nothing from Dr. Walker since I came over and have been unable to write to him as I did not ~~bring~~ bring his address. Some time ago, however, I wrote to Evans asking him to send it to me.

I think much of you all at Metis and the pictures presented to my mind ~~are~~ represent happy and bright days - always too short. Notwithstanding the drought I do hope you will get some flowers and vegetables from the garden, and be enabled also to add to the happiness of your neighbours. In her letter to B. ~~Clare~~ spoke of a flower (Sinaria) which had come out ~~and~~ and which she thought very pretty. If it is a Sinaria it is a close relation of the "butter & eggs" which grows occasionally on the Metis shore. B is just urging me to go for a walk before dinner, so I must finish later. (The dreadful flots above were produced by my fountain pen overflowing and then a gust of wind depositing the letter on the floor, inside down.)

8.30 p.m.

The Petersons (Dr. Mrs. & the two boys) have just arrived at Dinan & come to our hotel. They have gone to have some dinner, but I expect to have a pow-wow with them afterwards. It will be interesting to compare notes as they have been practically following in our footsteps.

Love to Mrs. Ingham and all the family from
 Your loving husband Bernard
 How I wish I had my wife with me!