

Nov 22. 1918

My dearest Ruth, I was delighted to get your letter; you are evidently on the right road now & I'm much relieved to hear there is nothing wrong with the lung. You have resisted the attack splendidly; I'm sure very few people who have pneumonia, however slightly, get over it as soon as that. I hate you to have the least thing wrong with your lung. I'm sure it's a good thing for that you should stay in bed for a time - keep you out of mischief - but I'm rather surprised you should have a whole week of that after your temperature is pretty well all right - as I suppose it was when you wrote. Anyway the great thing is to take every care of yourself.

I'm beginning to wish I could know whether my release will be a matter of days or months. After another 10 days or so I shall begin to get impatient. I want to be home with you & I want to have some time to turn

round before term begins. Ten days or a fortnight  
in London wouldn't be amiss & if it could be  
made to fit in with peace celebrations so much  
the better.

We were told yesterday afternoon that we should  
be moving from here at once - to Messon morning  
I suppose, because the French want the line we  
are on - they are building a bridge over the  
Scarpe half a mile further on & want to  
use this line, I suppose, as a siding for their  
trains of material - only a single line goes on to  
the bridge at present. We hope to go to a place  
not far away, a mile or two out of Arras on  
the Doullens line. There we should be practically  
out of the 'strafed' area. I for one should be  
much happier.

I expect you will be  
spending much time in bed reading, & I wonder  
what it will be. I have just finished *Black  
House*. It was very long, over 800 pages & not  
all of it very interesting. But Dickens when  
he is good does make the most convincing &



lonely people. He loves his characters himself & that is a great charm. There are at least 50 characters in *Bleak House* & of those he only really hates one & mildly dislikes half a dozen or so besides. I wish he could have been a more careful writer - but he was of the other sort, the kind that pour it out from the fulness of their observation & experience & I suppose you can't have 'em both ways. And then I can never quite get over his Victorian weakness for easy sentiment; and I don't know that his best characters, the shabby, dingy, scurrilous crowd particularly interest me.

Did I tell you that I was reading Beaumarchais the other day - *Figaro*; it is a perfectly splendid play, to read even & it was written to act; I was reminded most vividly of Mozart's music - not his *Figaro* in particular (I don't know it well enough), by a kind of sharp playfulness, a piercing quality of fun in the dialogue. B. is evidently one of the great men. There is

an auto biographical book called 'Mémoires'; I must try to get hold of it. The Rigas, you know, was published in the early seventeen eighties & is really propaganda aimed at the grand renouveau & the doctrine of status altogether - so you see its 'rapport' with the French Revolution.

While I write this it has turned up that there is an allotment of Paris leave going begging & I have put in for it - so that if I don't get released before the 29<sup>th</sup> I shall console myself by going to Paris, & spend my evenings in theatres & concert rooms & my days in bookshops. I wish you could come.

All my love to you dearest

Your loving  
George.

