

Aug. 19 1916

Amiens Cathedral


My dearest Ruth, At this moment particularly  
you ought to be with me - & what would you feel  
& say about it? That it belongs to the wonderful -  
il y a quelque chose de merveilleux - that the effect,  
undeniably here, I can't feel that you would doubt  
that for a moment. I am sitting half way down  
the nave & every moment it comes upon me that  
this is typical of the essential difference between  
France & English Gothic. It is not a question here  
of the long vista or severe grand spaces of  
unadorned wall - but simply of height &

width. I look up & up. And yet the <sup>entire the apse</sup> arches <sup>rise</sup>  
emphasized in one glance with the nave. The  
apse! This anyway is the true French note -  
how it does come off. My dear one, I half feel that  
you would be unconvinced - so much is in the  
mere elegance & finesse of the structure, & if the  
details are a little too flamboyant you would  
emphasize that - But no. As I follow up the  
two easterns of the four central pillars - clustered  
with a refinement beyond speech & without  
emphasis save the mere grace of achieving height  
with beautiful ease - & then beyond the crossing



look up again from the simple stilted or pointed  
arch with ample space of base wall above it, to  
the complicated triforium (if that be the just  
term where the back wall so to speak is a  
window), the richest layer or corresponding  
insignificant in height, & then to the elegant  
tall windows that go right up between the opposite  
shafts to a roof half lost in shadow behind them.

I'm describing what I see as accurately as  
possible - that effect is not to be denied.

What more shall I say? everywhere is an  
absolute regard for the vaulting shaft; but in the  
 nave the pillars have no cluster - merely four  
subsidiary pillars thus in section  of which  
two are vaulting shafts one for aisle & one for nave.  
And the vaulting itself is very simple which  
helps me to swallow the rich triforium & light  
the choir so far as its more architecture is  
concerned. As for the monuments - but  
I won't look at them.

There is much less stained glass than I expected  
- can it have been removed? But each aisle  
has some that is very beautiful. Can it be that



Some has been removed for safety.  
My mind is constantly in Canterbury where  
last I was with you in such a scene. But I  
my dear do you remember the miserable  
conducted party & the fuss about tickets etc -  
And here complete divine liberty; a scene  
of women praying - an equal number of  
servant beholding - a most beautiful harmony!  
If that represents the difference I think  
God help England & give me France.

I see now that I underestimated French  
piety; at least two score women are praying  
in different parts.

This letter will hardly get off this evening  
I feel that I've been idle about writing to  
you; nothing but idleness prevented me  
from writing to you yesterday dear Ruth  
I simply decided that idle I would be. I read  
a novel & I bathed - Oh! so divinely in  
a lovely lake - that's about all I did.



I felt almost ashamed last night when two  
letters arrived from you & quite frankly  
& this morning when yet another came.  
For all which I must ever so  
much. I often put it to myself that my  
happiness here depends greatly upon your  
letters. I believe I would have written to  
you before starting this morning - but  
when I awoke it was raining - then  
after a period of thought I finished my  
work before getting up - & that entailed a very  
late start for the day - breakfast at 9.30.  
Why don't you walk in here & sit down  
beside me & talk to me beautifully in low voice -  
as usual I haven't heard a voice since I entered.  
Well I think I shall go on & saunter  
round the old medieval quarter before tea.  
Goodbye darling - please forgive my  
laziness for this occasion. I would not like  
to say if it were a question of kissing you. Oh my  
dear one I could lay your sweet head on my breast  
& kiss your lips often, often. Yours lovingly  
Roger