

Sept. 6. 1916.

My dearest Ruth, I discovered this morning that my letter of the 4th hadn't left here - by an error consequent upon a change in our collecting arrangements here. I'm sorry. Yesterday afternoon was very unpleasant; I had to attend an inquiry held by some senior assisting officers with the object of discovering which of several batteries was firing into our own trenches some days ago. A hateful business - hateful that the infantry should have that cause of complaint, hateful to feel the uncertainty, a doubt which must be felt in the best conducted battery under these circumstances, hateful because every one was really there to save his own skin, or to put it just a little higher to save the credit of his battery, - a hateful finally because it was such

old work waiting three hours before
our audience was taken. I was not
concerned with one morning at 7.00
(forward observing officer) & was quite
happy about that so far as our own
firms were concerned because I had
been able to give a very good registration.

I have been well-pleased with
life to-day - working most of the
morning in the anteroom. It is
getting a little better. I noticed that the
dimensions are greater than I gave
you - about 10' x 7'. This evening
I walked into Albert to look for a
stove to keep us warm when the
old weather begins & dry our walls
which with other cause get very damp.
I wasn't very successful - it's a com-
plicated question - fuel has to be
considered & a chimney is difficult,

So I'm in favour of a small oil stove
- which has also an advantage in
portability. That I wasn't able to
procure. However I had a pleasant
chat with the old woman of the
'Quincaillerie' (I'm doubtful the spelling
but it means ironmongery), who has
stayed on all the time with a simple
trust in Providence & her good will
in spite of a dizaine of obs (skells)
which have half ruined the premises.
- & came away with yet another
oil-lamp. Shall I ever again be
able to have electric light - truly
the simplicity of an oil-lamp beats
everything.

We had very good news last night
the capture of Comblès by the French,
if as they say it was empty, that is a
most extraordinary fact. One feels
before the nose hopeful of military

events a real sense of a debacle in the clouds; they carry one on with fresh resolution & impetus. How much better things look now than a month ago!

You write very happily from the sea-side. I half suspect that you really want to do the childish things you conscientiously are not doing (or are you doing them by hours?) - at least I don't make art from your account. Whether it's insufficient wantonly that prevent you or a sense of propriety or fitness, I can hardly imagine myself building sand castles except with a child - though I remember enjoying the destruction of one you dug by the little waves on the littlest beach - Of course I'm old & shrewd & the sea more often appears mysterious & provokes thought - or if it I have a vision of the sea playful it provokes the desire to be dancing on the glittering waves or breasting the breakers!

Does the sea-side make any difference
to Clara I wonder - She must no
doubt notice the change in her
surroundings; but after all she leads
exactly the same life doesn't she? Please
give her kiss from me - not that she'll
be likely to count one or two more than
usual!

I am half lying on my bed in pyjamas,
making a big white splash under the
lamp in this sombre chamber. By the
bye all our dug-outs have been devoted
to-day for the convenience of the
guards who have the duty of sentry.
Mine is called 'Fathom Five', so it
ought to be a chamber of fancy, though
I'm afraid I can't supply coral or pearls
- let us hope if I change it will be for
something 'rich & strange'.

Now I shall turn in - breakfast at
7.30 to-morrow & I had a very poor
sleep in a chair last night.

God bless you dearest one beauty,
faithful loving wife God night
your loving George

