

Nov. 1. 1916.

My dearest Ruth, Life has not been wholly without incident since last I wrote. We have been visited by the deluge. That was two days ago, firstly, in the afternoon. For my part it was sufficient to hear the rain from the mess room; but when I visited ~~the mess~~ my dug-out after tea I found a threefold catastrophe; the water had got through to the staircase walls on either side the entrance, which were in a state of collapse, & so run into my dugout & flooded the floor; it was also leaking through between the wall & the cupola above the head of my bed & again at the opposite corner where it had made a hole in my table. I can't tell you what a wreckage it seems to make when this sort of thing occurs. It's not only what has happened but what is threatened. I went to sleep doubtfully that night & woke up to the sound of fast dripping water - another leak beside my bed - the result of another deluge. Shortly afterwards I was aware of confused shouting; our ~~with~~ Irishman was rushing wildly about crying out that 9 tons of earth had fallen upon him.

The wall of a dugout had collapsed & in point of fact quite a considerable amount of earth had fallen in. If it hadn't been so humorous it might have been rather alarming. The collapse of a roof if it has some 4 ft. or more of earth covering is a very serious matter - for that very reason I had carefully inspected all dug-outs the evening before: but we suffered no such catastrophe as that; the roof of the dug-out in question is only a temporarily corrugated iron affair & it would do no harm if it did fall in. Yesterday was spent in undoing the damage all round - a number of little jobs. The main cause of my own disaster was insufficient earth cover. We didn't originally throw all the earth back because it was so wet & we hoped it might dry up a bit first. But the continuous wet weather has not given me a chance. Luckily it was a beautiful drying day yesterday; I got two men to help me; we rammed down the earth with an earth-rammer used on the guns so that it obtained the consistency of a sad butter pudding, then ~~then~~ threw on some sets of new earth so as to increase the depth about 18 in & patted

it well down leaving a steep crown. I almost hope it will rain again so as to see what happens - I believe if it rains heavily enough it will run off beautifully - imagine how impressive the visit of an underbaked cake would be to water poured upon it.

I have a stove now which gives me a hope of eventual dryness; but it did a dirty trick <sup>last evening</sup> & I can't bear to describe the disgusting filth & smell it has created.

Last night I visited Plattner again; the other man who lives with him went to bed early in anticipation of early work this morning & I stayed till midnight talking mostly about poetry; it was a great pleasure & I quite like Plattner. He <sup>is</sup> a passionate admirer of Rupert Brooke - much more so than I am; but I brought away the two volumes to read them carefully again.

I was up in good time this morning - we began firing at 7.0; endless difficulties because the trail, very naturally, hinders itself in the usual pudding & after of about 10 rounds have been fired requisites 40 men to pull her out; with a brief interval

for breakfast, I was working quite hard, still unwashed & half-dressed till 10.30. It's fine again though somewhat misty & warm, so I expect we shall have more work during the day. I hope so, we get tired of waiting. I'm afraid these last 3 weeks have spoilt every thing on this front & they have shown how difficult it will be to get on during the winter. I suppose I shall be going to the O.P. to-morrow; it is my turn; and that will probably mean spending half the day up to my knees - or thighs perhaps - in slushy mud.

Will you please send out my climbing boots; they might be very useful in contending with these conditions. No letter from you since I last wrote; I hope for one today.

Dear love, I don't want you less as time goes on. No news of leave yet. I begin to wonder if I shall get back before Xmas. Fare well dearest one, I salute you not in the biblical way with one kiss, but with many.

Your loving

George.