

Saturday July 15 [1916]

My dearest Ruth, letters from you have been rather scarce of late. I received one dated July 4 when I came back to the battery last evening - the first I think since Sunday. No doubt this strenuous fighting has somewhat interrupted communications. We had good news yesterday or it really seems as though we have given the Hun something of a whacking & also that his reserves are pretty well used up. Shall we find suddenly one day that the war is over - finished or dramatically as it began?; not a very near day I fear - or rather I don't dare to hope. Still what we've heard, if the generals aren't lying is real good news as no doubt you will have seen long before this letter reaches you.

I rather enjoyed my three days at the O.P. - a very quiet time & much cooking done; I regret to say that the bedroom now smells very strongly of fried bacon - but perhaps that is better than the mesery dank odors it had before. I was sorry in a way that it was so misty yesterday - I might have seen the cavalry go over; as it was I could see nothing before 4:30 except in the early morning before dawn, when I saw an amazing sight - a long line of trenches apparently on fire & exploding with great flashes & clouds of sparks at intervals. I have been told since

it was a new French invention, a sort of liquid fire
concealed in the form of large bombs, which we were
sending over into the Hun front line.

I shall await your next letter, or rather I am waiting
for it with special interest because it ought to answer
my long discourse about religious education. I expect
you will disagree with much of what I said - but I
hope you will understand the basis from which I argue
& agree with that. Of course the whole idea wants
working out practically - that is what I intend
to write a book about when I come back like the Gay
Travellers - would that I could come back with my
pocket full of lays!

I was so much excited by the good news last night
that I lay awake a long while thinking of you &
of my return. The worst is still before me in a
sense; there will be the hopes of victory, but also the
rotting bodies of the enemy & manifold horrors I
expect. The country over which we have been fighting
so far is reduced to a state of complete desert; one
would be surprised to meet with a tree that had leaves
or even branches except a ragged remnant. There may be
a wood or two which the enemy has evacuated before
we have knocked it to pieces. If he goes back more quickly
things will be different: but surely he must make a big
stand on his third line. Our guns have served us
so badly in one way or another these past few days that
I fear we shall not be among the first to go forward; in

Please send some thing
Your loving George

fact it is evident that we are not among them
for long - in case I have to suffer in the O. Again