

Sept. 16. 1916.

My dearest Ruth, The battle continues a very much in our favour so far. You will guess how it may affect us - but beyond material circumstances the effect on the spirits is wonderful. This is far the most exciting day since the bitter disappointment of July 1. I have been up most of the night and sleep this morning so I expect this will be a meagre letter. I was very diligent with Old Mortality during the night watches (we were expecting a counter-attack) I begin to understand Scott very well. His fault from our present-day standpoint is that he sacrifices character to scene - I don't know that he ever does this with his best heroes or heroines; but in this book the minor characters are ruthlessly twisted out of themselves in a number of places to produce the incident or the effect. And this is the clue to the general truth about him that his interest is not like almost all our great writers (or at all events good writers) of more recent times primarily psychological but



dramatic a historical ; of course you can't have  
good drama without good characters a Scott  
makes no end of good characters - but lightly  
drawn. However it makes very good reading  
& I shall try some more. I believe it would  
be worth while reading the historical ones  
again for the sake of the history which I  
should probably find full of interesting  
byways as *Old Mortality* is & of really fine  
attempts to portrait characters from the  
historical point of view.

How are you getting on with Roswell? The  
way to love that book I believe, is to read  
it straight through 'the first time' & then  
to use it as a bedside book from which  
you pick out morsels for special tasting  
& digestion. I wonder what edition you are  
using. The little six volume edition of Burslem  
which is in my study is very handy for general  
use & nicely printed ; & there is Nisbet & Hill  
in six big volumes for the student - which  
won't be your way I suspect. I hope you aren't  
using *Everyman*. Roswell so particularly  
wants 'a page' & not a mere sheet of paper  
crammed with words. I hope you're fastidious



about that?

Dearest one I much hope you will manage to tide over the next six weeks without any great feelings of either anxiety or love-lessness, to coin a word. So far as the O.P. work goes I think it might prove less dangerous as we advance, because, with the ground in our favour, we might be able to observe from such a distance that there will be no severe 'barrage' to pass & behind the support trenches which generally 'catch it'. But it is idle to predict anything. At all events six weeks is a short time & by then you will surely be able to look forward to my leave; & so shall I!

I shall now retire to rest, so as to get it over before lunch; & then if I have to work to-night I shall keep awake.

Very cold weather here now - how is it with you? Two cakes arrived together yesterday with postmarks of 8<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup>. Many thanks dear one; it was well thought of. They have not yet been opened

Am I to have some more fresh butter one  
of these days? That would be nice.

Great love to you dear Ruth

Yours sleepily, loving George.

