

Feb. 9 - 1917.

My dearest Ruth, I'm sitting by a very warm stove in a wonderfully white little room. A couple of maps are pinned to the walls & a few cuttings from an illustrated paper - *La Vie Parisienne*. A neat wooden bedstead is against one wall; its position appears to have been chosen with a view to warming the feet, which will be only 2 ft. from the stove if one doesn't curl up abnormally. There is a table on either side the door filling the two corners opposite the bed, one for writing, the other for washing. Two shelves above the bed, a short row of pegs, & a string for clothes line *à l'ordinaire* as the French say - no, there's one more article of furniture, which sadly *manque de style* - a chair. What a change of scene! to be comfortable and alone - I like that. And what a change of companions. Yesterday my English colonel (Hull's aero-plane bombs quite near & I can hear the boche's engine. I hope he won't drop any here damn him! - who, in reflection seems to me more like a Gilbert & Sullivan Chinese mandarin than any other figure I can think of; a typical smart young man of the most respectable kind, a typical north country engineer & a typical deliberate Scot. Today three Frenchmen - Latin to the core



I've left the group for the time being - I'm what's called  
'liaison officer'. I don't expect to be here many days.  
I'm bound to say I feel somewhat of a stranger in a  
strange land. After all I am English; and though the  
French are kind as well as polite they don't like us.  
We annoy them in a dozen different ways. I find myself  
sympathising with them a good deal. I've often been  
amused by the bad manners of our officers towards  
the French. But I do hate them to have a bad opinion  
of us altogether. This afternoon some of our infantry  
acted in an almost miserably foolish fashion. It concerned  
the people here to some extent & I heard them talking  
of the incident - 'ces messieurs anglais' etc with  
more than a shade of contempt for our nonchalant way  
of doing things. Later I heard one of them talking on  
the telephone. I heard him say 'Ils sont grotesques' &  
I was aware that he ~~was~~ referred to the English.

I regard this as quite an amusing experience. But  
the worst of it is I shall be very badly off for mail  
- my letters will wander round the country in a most  
lengthy fashion. Meanwhile I very much want to have  
news of your father.

Feb. 5. I became very sleepy at this point & if  
I hadn't by accident put my fingers against the



stove I should have slept where I was.

Not much doing here to-day. I'm beginning to like the folk here, particularly the lieutenant who is about my own age. The colonel is a simple old soldier much troubled by rheumatism & one who says what he thinks. The captain looks rather a little pip, but he is evidently a gay soul & behaves quite pleasantly. We talk a good deal about one thing & another - a certain amount about general military organization. The news from America came this evening - not surprising but very satisfactory. I can't see how the Germans can avoid war with them now unless they give in altogether. I take it that the neutrals country with Germany can't come in though I wish they would. The more I think of the possibilities of the submarine danger the less I believe in it - & perhaps we are nearer the end of the war than anyone dare hope.

I've been reading to-day Rupert Brooke's book Webster & the Elizabethan Drama - so far I don't like it. It has all the faults of youth & too little to redeem them. He was a charming person & I liked him up to a certain point - but I don't feel like taking him as a gospel, much as I admire his talent for poetry. His prose seems



to me charming & ugly & he doesn't always quite know  
what he's talking about. Perhaps I shall like it  
better later on.

During the day we live more  
or less in the office. Coffee when one works in the  
morning, déjeuner apparently 11.30 & dinner  
at 7.0 (no afternoon tea of course). After dinner  
every one returns.

This afternoon I had a very  
pleasant walk; not much to see as it was  
misty but it seems the usual base country  
broken up by little dingles & copses & bigger  
woods - not nearly so interesting as those from  
marshes with white silt and weed growing among  
the reeds & blue hills beyond the great curve  
of the river.

Darling I want to kiss you & hold you close  
& talk to you sweet - long.

Ever so much love dear me

Yours loving George

