

Aug. 8.

My dearest Ruth, Something has gone wrong with our mails - not ours alone I believe - they seem to have stopped altogether. It is now five or six days since I had a letter from you. I must console myself with the thought that a wonderful large budget is due to arrive one of these days.

We have a new officer - another Scot! I took him up to the trenches yesterday. He was very tired & I had a headache - not a pleasant day. The weather has again become very hot, & pushing one's way along the trenches is dry work. He's not a bad fellow I think - though I'm not greatly interested at present.

Ober has not yet returned & I begin to think that his recovery may be a slower business than Litz's you imagined from his last letter. We are settling in here quite happily now, & everyone seems cheerful.

We have been very short of papers yesterday lately & news of the great world is scarce. However I am off to visit the Field Cashier this afternoon & it will be hard if I can't find a 'marchand' & raise some French papers. There was a violent bombardment in this sector last night, but I don't know with what results & on the previous night I believe something unusually important was going on where the French are - which side was attacking I can't say. The battle has certainly been going pretty well lately in its slow way.

I soothed myself to sleep last night by reading Keats  
& came across my best-loved Sonnet as I think it is - about  
the sea - 'It keeps eternal whisperings etc - & found  
myself responding very fully to the 2<sup>nd</sup> four lines

'Often 'tis in such gentle temper found  
That scarcely with the very smallest shell  
Be moved for days from whence it sometime fell  
When lest the winds of heaven were unbound'

What a picture of peace!

But after all it's wonderfully still just now here in  
the shade of my dug-out. Occasionally a dull-banging  
or the whistle of a shell. Yes, when I listen I can  
hear such noises fairly continuously.

What will you be doing this afternoon - sitting along  
the cool shade of the ditch? Do you know I haven't  
bathed this summer since that morning at Westbury  
just before I came out. O! for a swim in the dipple of  
a delicious stream over my limbs! And green meadows  
And gliding fishes!

I must get ready to go off now. I may add to this  
later.

The bike punctured & let me down; but I strolled  
through sunset gardens in — & came back with  
a bunch of flowers which was a compensation.

This is very disturbing news about the Kent prisoners  
- or rather absence of news.

Four letters from you & a budget of papers. I had a letter from Mr Allen also. I don't feel angry with him - because I know he must have acted from a sense of duty. And how do you know what has passed between him & her. Surely if she loves him she would rather have him than not have him at all. Of course I regard it as the risk of one more life for possibly no good: but I take it that a parson must go where he thinks he can most usefully minister to spiritual needs.

Oh my dear I do like your letters. With regard to the reading of books for something which is not enjoyment - the sad thing is that many people read so that they may appear wise; they pick up current ideas & on the one hand there's so to speak another card to play, on the other they feel like little Jack Horner after pulling out the plum. What a good by word! But you're not & never can be like that; nobody's motives were ever more pure I feel sure. And that's partly what I mean by saying you don't wobble - not so much constancy in love [which is wonderful & beautiful] but constancy in goodness.

Bell is with me lying out on top of a bank - an idle time & really with this delicious sunshine very enjoyable. My wits are too dull to write

You much of a letter. I am feeling sum fed - do you know what I mean - a placid state when nothing occurs to me.

Tell me one or two things about the Art Garden - are the wicker roses throwing? And what of the climber we planted & all that bank? And the pink & rock roses & campanulas in the walls? And the pale roses we planted last summer in the square?

Goodwell dearest.

Your loving George.

