

On the Road.

Friday June 9

My dearest Ruth These are a few moments of a true summers' evening snatched apart in a beautiful green orchard & I'm sitting half in sun half in shadow on the best stem of an old apple tree; a most peaceful scene. I am very happy & rather excited. I haven't the least idea what is on — or whether anything particular is intended. But I do feel that the war is moving & that it's time for us to attack now. The French have lost Vaux & must be hard-pressed I think. I don't find among the French up here any certainty that Verdun will be held nor any opinions about the war — only a sublime patience! They are a glorious people & I admire French women enormously; — 'one widow for every 3 married' I was told yesterday; and they remain as cheerful in their grief & as determined — energetic as you can well imagine. I have just been talking to the good wife of the farm where I was billeted last night. Her husband is 46 & is somewhere near Verdun. She is working the farm & dealing with a large family & manages to take an intelligent interest in the war that would do credit to an educated English woman or anyone else for that matter — because she faces the facts with such calm reason. — But to go back to our part

I feel we can't let France & Russia bear all the losses; of the four powers we alone are not desperately engaged at present. Of course I know nothing - still it does seem that the moment to strike must have come. I'm quite hoping to take part in an attack.

Tomorrow if I'm lucky I shall see one of the most glorious of French Cathedrals. We are travelling very easily at present - leaving time for the gun to be overhauled & I expect ^{we} shall reach to night's destination by midnight & so get another good night's sleep; after that I know nothing. I have spent much of to-day arranging for a party of men to have a hot bath this evening, visiting the town-major of a place 5 miles from here & the field-cashier (to get some money) at a third place. I'm beginning to know my way about the army to some extent - i.e. I know who to go to for what.

I'm tremendously elated by the news of 5000 Austrians - the capture of Lutsk - it means a lot for the future that the Russians can deliver a smashing blow like that - let alone the immediate consequences which will not be small.

Now dearest I must eat a hasty meal before we set out. Great love to you dearest & kind thoughts to Westbrooke - where you must surely be. O for a letter!
Yr. loving George.