

Dec. 3. 1916.

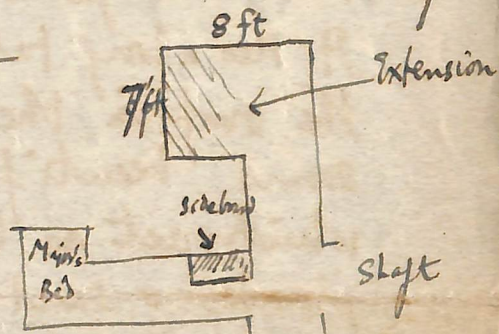
My dearest Ruth, I had two jolly letters from you the day before yesterday & another yesterday. You hadn't yet had the bad news about leave. I hope you're not feeling very gloomy about that. My last letter must have rather disgusted you. What animals we are - most of us! We are now largely occupied with thoughts of Xmas. The palace is now habitable - I won't say complete because there will still be room for various internal improvements - for instance we haven't built a fire place yet. It has a long table at each side & a row of posts supporting the roof in the middle, & in spite of these encumbrances seems beautifully roomy. The roof rests on iron rails which act as beams about 3'6" apart - above them planks & sand bags & about a foot of earth; then a iron rails, some 50 of them, laid side by side across the breadth making a solid iron layer; they are long enough to reach solid earth on each side so that their weight is not altogether bearing upon ceiling. Above them again earth & finally corrugated iron to keep out the rain. Considering what a vast roof it is with its five to six feet of cover it is moderately safe & I have little doubt it will be try. The men are delighted with the results of their labours & it has supplied them with an interest & an occupation.

I am arranging a football match for Xmas Day with Platnam's battery, so I greatly hope we shall have fine weather. At present it is cold here - dull days the temperature about freezing point all the

time. The ground has been beautifully hard for two days & still remains hard to-day though it is not quite so cold.

My week as B.C. comes to an end to-night & Dunbar will take over from me; I shall be very busy then scouring the country side for beer & sausages. On the whole I have quite enjoyed this last week, though one feels rather stuck in an office when it is necessary always to be within range of a telephone.

The Major has a great work going on in the Mess - we are building out a dining room at the end of one passage - roughly like this; - It will be boarded all round just as the present passage is, & might to be finished to-morrow night.



I have thought of several things I want: - ^{Staircase}
(1) My Italian books; a red Italian Grammar; Mil's Italian translation of Alice in Wonderland & the English; a little yellow paper backed book, Il Giocatore by Dostoevsky (I came across an English translation out here); and if possible a dictionary - I have lost mine, but perhaps you could get me one?

(2) Two pairs thick stockings

(3) Two tooth brushes

(4) Literary Supplements which you have promised; also could you occasionally send me various journalistic literature such as; - the New Statesman, the Nation, Review of Reviews, Contemporary Review or any other? You see me at bookstall with anything in the contents

likely to interest me particularly. Now I've time for reading I want to keep in touch with the world.

(5) Tea; - the last lot you sent was very good; so please let me have some more of the same. It is more worth while having tea now with the smaller number in the mess.

An excellent plum cake arrived a few days back; I forgot to mention it in my last. The 'mark' of plum cake has varied though I don't know how I should describe the difference; I like this last mark - which was also the first - better than the intermediate ones - not that they hadn't their excellencies too.

I refrain from making any remarks about the war; perhaps the Huns will have captured Bukharest by the time this reaches you & then besides reckoning the gain to the enemy we shall be forced to make some very unfavourable criticisms of the Russian army but till the worst happens I shall continue to believe in them.

I must now do some work. Goodbye dearest one. I'm in rather a silent mood; but it would be very different with me if I could be with you. Great love to you always.

Yours lovingly
George

