

March 9 1917

My dearest Ruth,

I am spending the days at the O.P. - & much enjoying them though it has snowed far too much to-day and there's not much to be seen. I have been quite busy most of the time. Yesterday we only stopped firing at 6. & I was then some distance away observing from another place, & we then had to mend the wire. After a highly unelegant meal I went forth again partly to see some intelligence officers & establish a liaison with them & partly to find out what time a small attack was to come off. Very shortly after I had started the show began - first our guns & some other heavy batteries & then the field guns. I was walking along a road, much too near up to be at all comfortable in a 'staff' - though a good enough place in quiet times. I seemed like charging our <sup>advanced</sup> field guns as though I were at Balaclava & was rather afraid the Hun would start a barrage at the same time, but luckily he hardly retaliated. I had quite an interesting

walk round the trenches - though the officers weren't in; but it was disappointing not to be with the infantry before the attack, as I wanted to be. It is quite part of the game to be there if one can; they are always a bit nervous of their own artillery and it gives them confidence to have gunner officers present.

I had a very wakeful night - not because I was cold, for I have my sleeping bag here & keep warm enough in spite of this bitter east wind at the foot - but because I wanted the signallers to go out on the line in the first light, & felt certain that they wouldn't wake up. I got up before sunrise & looked about. The river & the town beyond were looking lovely - it must have been an enchanting place, & it was a very pretty morning. I have been learning the country today, though it has snowed a good deal. It is a very cold job standing about.



I shall be relieved to-morrow night - I'm not in any great hurry - though probably <sup>would</sup> get tired of being here much longer than 2 days in winter.

A party has just arrived - it is now after dark with some rations, water, & 20 miles of wire - which we shall have the unpleasant job of laying to-night. And they've brought me a letter from you.

I agree with you about 'Diana' - not one of his best & tiresomely clever - but I liked parts - an Irish part I seem to remember. I shall send this back with the two signallers who are to be relieved by two from the other section. Besides them I have my servant here. There's almost nothing for him to do except wash up my plate & frying pan - I don't wash or shave up here, & I sleep in my clothes. But I'm very glad to have him here & he will learn to observe; he seems a very nice man, a hardy & brave; he had never done this job before.

Dearest one I continually turn my thoughts  
to you very lovingly. You are my chief  
spiritual need. How I wish you were beside  
me here - you would be amused; & you  
might complain of cold feet; perhaps we  
should rub each others toes. This is a  
very deep dug out - 25 ft. of heat over -  
& quite well made. I am feeling  
very cheerful & full of energy - which  
is not a bad thing as I quite expect to  
have a very dark all night.

Farewell beloved

Your loving George

