

Thursday 9-30 a.m.

[4 May 1916]

British Officers' Club,  
Eggham.

A.P.O. No 1 B.E.F.

My dearest Ruth, How can I tell you with what sensations I find myself, with time on my hands, in a place so often flitted through before with a distant goal of pleasure? The inescapable fact establishes itself - that the same note of pleasure culled in the same transitory way is here to-day. Breakfast in ~~the~~ open air at a café, the jolly French garden, my impudent French, noisy and incoherent (not that my four companions could have guessed that for they know hardly a word), purchases made with much searching for French equivalents & laughter with an 'adroit' French girl as gay as she is clever; the familiar sights & sounds all here too; a sort of happy (or seemingly so) clatter of the place & something careless & débonnaire about it; the new streets & buildings bright spacious & sunlit & the ancient parts quite lovely in the soft light this morning with their fine old romantic beauty.

And now we're pitched very happily upon a hospitable house - quite a grand house in its way with spacious florid rooms, oak parquet floors & much ornamented ceilings, & one which has seen, as you may observe from

my address a wonderful change of fortune since the war began. I hope it approves the quiet stream that moves in & out on its way to great actions - better rather at least than the real business with their passionate culture.

At this point I break off - go for orders to an office in the town, & learn nothing of my destiny beyond the tiny fact that we proceed to a camp this afternoon. Thence I will dispatch a p.c. this evening with an address if I know one.

The journey last night was not comfortable. It seems to me as I write that it's very difficult to tell you anything of about travelling without infringing laws of censorship. I can't for instance tell you why, presumably I was uncomfortable, because that is concerned with a break in the journey, & the significance of that is concerned with time. Suffice it to say that I slept lightly for a portion of the night ~~and~~ on wires that once underlay in mean degree of luxurious ease, & was so beautifully hungry for breakfast this morning that I consumed three eggs 'sur le plat' with no little gusto.

I thought much of you, sweet, during the long night. Not chiefly of the principal fact that I haven't <sup>you</sup> still with me - perhaps because it has been already <sup>in</sup> discounted so greatly by anticipation & so accepted as the hard inevitable thing - but mostly with a sort of exhilaration & special happiness because you were

So beautiful & splendidly brave yesterday afternoon.  
Those last moments will stay with me dear Ruth  
in spite of their sadness, as great joyous ones.

But I'm afraid I behaved disgracefully & went off  
with your ticket - which I still have & will enclose;  
I believe I can't have taken a hike ticket at all.  
Perhaps, however, it helped you in reality to have a  
practical thing to bother about - did it?

I found my companions very kind & pleasant  
yesterday. You would have been defrauded I'm afraid  
if you had come to my journey's end & found me  
whisked away in no time. I wonder about the  
rest of your time?

I hope you will get this to-morrow.

I shall put myself comfortably in an arm chair  
now (11-15) & hope for a snooze.

Do let me hear that you are somehow happy.

My poor dear, dear Ruth. I expect our faces will  
fly together in the night & kiss midway between  
France & England.

With all my love to you dearest

Yours lovingly, George

Sorry I meant G etc