

Oct. 26. 1916.

My dearest Ruthy I don't know how much of a letter I shall get written this morning. We are fixing here at a slow rate & I am looking after the gun; which means that I am almost doing nothing; the programme is all written out in the No. 1's book & I can retire into my dug-out at intervals for short spaces. I've had very little of this 'standing-by' to do lately & it's not a job I like - not in this cold wet weather. On the other hand one wants to do what the men do & when the gun has to be hauled out of the mud one likes to lend a hand. It rained most of yesterday & there is every prospect of another wet day. Last night we had two parsons in to dinner - one a Canadian & a real good genuine man whom I intend to see more of & the other a tiresome Irishman who has been living in Canada; we had an amusing argument about bequests which was rather refreshing. Wood, Dunbar & Casey have now established a mess at the right half - which is rather a relief as the Captain dislikes them & it is still quite possible to keep in touch with them. They are only 700 yds away. Lithgow, Bell & I get along quite happily here. I saw Earl & Williams last evening at their mess, which is in sight from my dug-out.

It is extraordinarily annoying that I see so little of them. The reason is that they have apparently no system of relief in their battery; they never know that they are definitely off duty & apparently their Major considers it such a wonderful diversion to leave the battery at all that they don't like to ask permission. I suspect that is their fault at least as much as his & very foolishly so; it is quite easy to show that you are willing to do everything in your power & at the same time demand freedom when you're not wanted. Austin is troubled by some complaint of the kidneys - an old story - which all is aggravated by damp & I fear he'll find it difficult to keep well under these conditions of life. However I found him cheerful & very amusing.

I suppose you've read Kipling on the Battle of Jutland - isn't it glorious! I want very much to see the reports on which his story is founded. Do you know if a Blue Book or any thing of the sort has yet been published containing the official stories of different ships. It sounds improbable

at this early rate - but if Kipling has seen  
them I don't see why I shouldn't. Will you  
please make enquiries for me dear! Curtis ought  
to know & probably won't. Mess<sup>rs</sup> Wyman are  
the Gov<sup>t</sup> publishers - but I can't remember  
the name of their little street south of Holborn.

We had difficulties with the gun &  
consequently I was occupied all the time till  
after 12.0. I shall write no more now  
or I shall miss the post.

Think of me as uniformly cheerful & still  
subject to occasional ecstasy - as when I read  
about the destroyers; and you, you, you  
dear Ruth haunting my spirit always.

Farewell sweet love

Yours lovingly,  
George.

