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BELGIUM
2nd lect

My dear Alice

Will you forgive me if I include the family letter to you, this week as a small way of thanking you for sending the c which I hope to get a chance to use at some future date if I don't return it. It was very good of you and I fear I made the cable more about it than to wish you many happy returns. Have not received any London letters since writing so will start my diary without further preamble :-

Wednesday 29th left. Cackshutt's turn for the bath so had to forgo that pleasure. The canvas bath we have about 3/4 square is really fine, and folds up into a very small compass.

Spent the morning going over the defences of a strong hill near here with White and a Capt Wilson, R.E. who had carried out the work. Very interesting & instructive in spite of a heavy rain that soaked us. Home for lunch and changed, spending afternoon going over maps and putting in the Serban line as far as we can pick it up. Hughes our cook gives us splendid dinners always soup and coffee & nuts. We are faring very well and it only costs us about 12 francs a day.

Thursday 30th Sept. ^{II} Wrote up War diary for Sept and left it ready to send in tomorrow. Rather put out that a fatigue party I had to furnish was late and had to give my officers quite a severe call down. I won't have a guard or fatigue report late and they must do their part and see that their own men are on time. I was sorry to have to deprive one man of 10 days pay and 10 days "Field punishment" for drunkenness but it is the only way.

Rode to K. with Pockshutt and was almost heartbroken to see a beautiful city (17,480 pop) utterly devastated and beautiful buildings centuries old wantonly destroyed. They drop a few shells on there nearly every day now just out of bravado or whenever they want to show temper. Saw one house with front blown off and piano and drawing room furnishings (beautiful) open to street and irreparably wrecked, another with half loaded waggon in front of it left standing.

All the wholesalers are either scattered or died there. There are a dozen smaller towns just about here in similar straits and most of them with very old churches in ruins. I tell you it is terrible to contemplate I may get more used to it in time. The Gurkhas have pulled up a big score but it will be balanced someday if there is any justice on earth. They have suffered.

III

2 lect

There is a refugee in this farm now who had a sister humped in her husband's farm house while he was away.

agreeably surprised to have a call from Wood & Allan in P.M. both looking very well. They are about 7 miles away and Cutbert & will return call (P.V.) next Sunday. They stayed for afternoon tea and rode back. Peggy looked fine and Wood says is practically never ill. Wrote Sarah in evening who has sent over a couple of cakes and other delicacies which were most acceptable. Cockshutt dining with 3rd Troop so alone in evening.

Friday 1st Oct (Matthew's birthday month)

Called on 1st Troop to see how they carry on at morning stables and found things O.K. We have all four horses as well as things under cover and I only hope we will be allowed to keep these quarters. Spent day with Cockshutt again going over his section and had lunch in a little inn in a small town that is shelled every day (or nearly every day); the people "carry on" as if nothing were the matter and the Germans at present were careful as when they start, the British retaliate and generally they stop at once. Received letter from Sarah and statement from Father which I will study and reply.

to when next I write ^{IV}. Quite a lot of firing ^{2 lect}
in evening. Artillery fire rattles every window
in this old house and last Friday when the big
show was on it was a continual giggle
nearly all night. We get information
summaries every day and I now get my
"Times" the next day; I had it for yesterday
at 11.00 AM today. I also get for me
five other English dailies every day gratis
as well as tobacco & cigarettes for all ranks
every Sunday. Do not think there will
be the suffering from exposure this winter
that there was last as requirements now
fully known and will be provided for. I
believe we are to get an issue of oil stoves
and now get 1# of coal per man per day.
Saturday 2nd Oct. Beautiful fall day such
as we used to love for hunting. I took
long ride along with Leslie to a monastery
(now a hospital) about 6 miles in rear of
us, on top of a high hill. I wear old
place such as one reads about. Got my
white breeches dyed kahi for Hill also
some chocolate for my babies. Spent evening
writing. Church parade tomorrow but I
am going to see Wood. Had a nice letter
from Mrs. Brinton which I must answer
Love to Mother and all
ever your affectionate brother
D.H.