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Dearest Mother,
your letter to Sarah (about Mr. Leven) was so much appreciated by both of us and your expressions of sympathy for Sarah at my departure touched me very deeply and I am sure that this war (if it does nothing else) will bring us all then more closely together than we have ever been before. I sent it on to Wood and I am sure he will appreciate it also. He has passed ^{on} two letters of yours written in Boston on Oct 11th & Oct 15th respectively which I enjoyed very much, also some other enclosures therewith. It grieves me to think that dear Aunt Lizzy feels a little but as you say she does and it will be one of my first pleasures to write her at the earliest opportunity. It is needless to say that she (as well as your other brother's & sisters) holds a very warm place in my heart and always will and her many kindnesses to us all (and me in particular) will never be forgotten. It is possible that I have not been as attentive during the last year or so as I might have been but if so it was not because I wished to slight her (or them) now was it because I esteem them wonderful goodness to us in the past, any less than formerly. It was only the other day I was thinking of Aunt Emma and I think I wish you to send her a diary letter once in a while.

31st Oct

II

Tell Father that his most interesting letter of 13th was very much appreciated. I hope he won't mind my sending it on to Sarah as I am sure she is interested in the shells as well as Wood & myself. It is too bad that there have been some set backs but they are to be expected and when overcome successfully add to the satisfaction of the ultimate result which I am sure will be profitable. I wonder if they tried a spray of water working automatically on the upper die when ~~not~~ waiting at the top of its travel? I think by using a jet with small pipes and a cock that would be turned off (if necessary) by the die as it came down. This might help the upper die to last longer. On the whole I consider the result most satisfactory. I shall be most interested in the photographs when they come. Are you using Hydro for lighting at London Electric?

I am so glad you got my cable, I sent it at noon on 12th from here so it took 36 hours which is not too bad. It only cost me 75¢. You (or other officers families) will get one like it once a week from now on I hope which should help to keep us a little more closely in touch.

Tell me, have any of my letters so far been opened by the Censors at London? I hear they

III

are getting very strict once again and opening a letter in every ten, in spite of our own censor stamp. My ^{no.} is 2468 as you may have noticed, an easy number to remember.

I am enclosing a clipping from "London Chronicle" about the review at Soerbroek I was present, as already described. It tells it with a few flourishes but is a good and true account. The "planes" were very active and watchful.

I hear very regularly from Sarah, who is going to move to another house in Leyland in a most desirable locality and is busy ^{with} and interested in war work of various kinds. I am glad she seems so well and bright. Our namesakes there been kindness itself to her. I hope to meet them some time.

I will pick up thread of my diary now although things very quiet and hardly anything to record.

Friday 29th Oct Cold bath and took the ride in the AM in quite a heavy rain. Have picked out a route however which is about the right length over fairly good roads so as not to get horses coated with too much mud. The best Belgian roads are "Pavée" or have cobble stones down the centre wide enough for one vehicle and mud on the two sides. They are good but it is difficult for two large vehicles (motor trucks) to pass. The English however have a regular road department with novel battalions and

IV

are turning a lot of mud roads into fine metalled roads, made with broken stone and well drained and rolled in with steam or gasoline rollers. These are the best of all and most of main trunk lines (unless paved) have been improved in this way. Took over 74 remounts for the Division which will be called for by the various units for whom intended. Of course nothing is said if we pick them over a little as they pass through our hands, but not much cast as principally "light draft". Last time they were only 35 and I expect there will be a good many more as time goes on, as this weather and mud and no cover is hard on the poor horses. Capt Mc Ewen looks after this very ably for me.

Spent the afternoon looking over some special trenches with White for Hoys and saw Wood for a few minutes as they were near his battery. He hopes to get Camp again soon and our state will enjoy it. Changed clothes when I came in and sat by fire reading papers in evening. Received a very nice box from Sarah which was most acceptable. Mc Ewen in for lunch so he shared "the cake". Cochrane gets boxes often too so we are well looked after at this billet. She also sent me a dictionary to help with my French which I try and practice a little each day. Am reading a French novel.

31 Oct

V

Saturday 30th Oct. Took ride in again. We are now over here six weeks. Time has passed very fast but expect it will drag a little more as the winter comes along. However we are most comfortable here and horses too, which is a relief. Working at our survey most of day; much assisted by Capt Humphry of Cyclists (an expert). Rode out some mud roads in PM to report on their condition. Much colder at night and glad of a fire.

Sunday 31st Oct. Church parade at 11.00 which is a bad hour for us as interferes with noon stables and makes men late. Other officers still out on survey. Hope to finish it this week. Letter from Sarah but nothing from Canada. Men get a great many boxes by post both from England and Canada. Some are pretty well battered as wood is in almost necessary. Will close now for today and add a few lines in AM.

Monday 1st Nov Took ride again. Cold wet. Had a very pleasant call yesterday from Capt Thomas of 1st Btn (brother of my Regt Major) who now has a company. He is one of two officers left in that Bde. Officers in this morning about maps and are starting out again in rain. Will try and see Wood again early this week. Am glad to say he has a very comfortable billet and a very nice old woman. Ever so much love dear Mother your devoted son
J.H.