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France
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Dearest Mother

It is now about a week since I wrote last though I sent Alice a few lines a couple of days ago or so. Very little of interest has transpired in the last few days. The Battery has been in two different positions and I now have the guns on a road leading through a small swamp. They are well hidden but it is difficult to get good platforms for steady firing on account of the soft nature of the ground.

We have been moved into this position, (I think) to participate in a small attack that is to take place hereabouts. The ultimate objective is La Bassie but of course this will not be attained yet. I suppose, as usual, that the infantry will

take a few hundred yards of trenches at appalling cost and that the Germans will make new trenches a little further back which will have to be taken in their turn later. This process of nibbling as it is called is all wrong in my opinion and the ground gained each time is not worth the lives that are lost in attaining it.

Probably a really big attack will come off some day which will force the whole German line to shift but until then nothing very favorable can be expected. In the meantime the news from Russia is anything but encouraging and it will take our allies some time to recover from their recent defeats. I am told that

several of Kitchener's new armies
are now out here and that
there is a second line behind
us composed of these troops.
This seems to be confirmed by
reports from England.

I am still living in the
open as it is to be
preferred when the weather is
good. I have, however, a room
in a nearly four-house where
we eat and I can move in
there should the weather become
very bad. I am still bothered a
little with an ankle I wrenched
a bit up at Ypres but it is
trivial and I keep a house
near the Battery which enables
me to avoid any unnecessary
walking. Otherwise I have never
felt better; in fact nearly all
the men are exceptionally well
and I think this can be

attributed to the open air, good food and a strict abstinence from local water. I have a Battery water cart which comes up to the guns each day with a supply of chlorinated water and from it the men all fill their water bottles. The water used by the peasants hereabouts would be considered ordinarily by us to be too dirty even for washing purposes. However I suppose the natives are immune from typhoid etc because the filth is part of their normal surroundings.

My guns at night are laid on a crossroad in village called Chappelle St Roch. The range is measured, fuzes set and everything left in readiness before dark so that a rapid fire can be opened on this point at any

time during the night.

I had a note from Campbell Becker the other day sending me some maple sugar from Roly Shyer of Dunboyne. Roly was down at his farm one summer but did not prove to be in good the next spring. Campbell is well, the losses of the first battalion so far have been lighter than those of any other, so I am told.

I hear that some of our big guns are being mounted in rear of us here and it is to be hoped that the report is true. The shortage of ammunition is not apparent here but I understand it still exists. Probably the new methods of handling combat in England will help this trouble very greatly. They seem to have a very strong

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Coalition government there and
universal service seems assured
though it will take some weeks
or months to work the scheme
out. I am enclosing some
clippings from the Times which
might interest Father and
yourself. With much love
your devoted son
Ward

P.S. I suppose by the time
this reaches you that I shall have
have been gone some time.