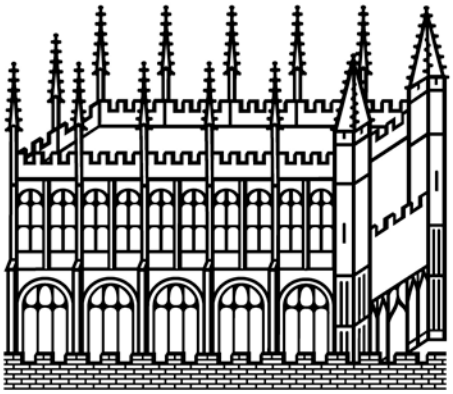

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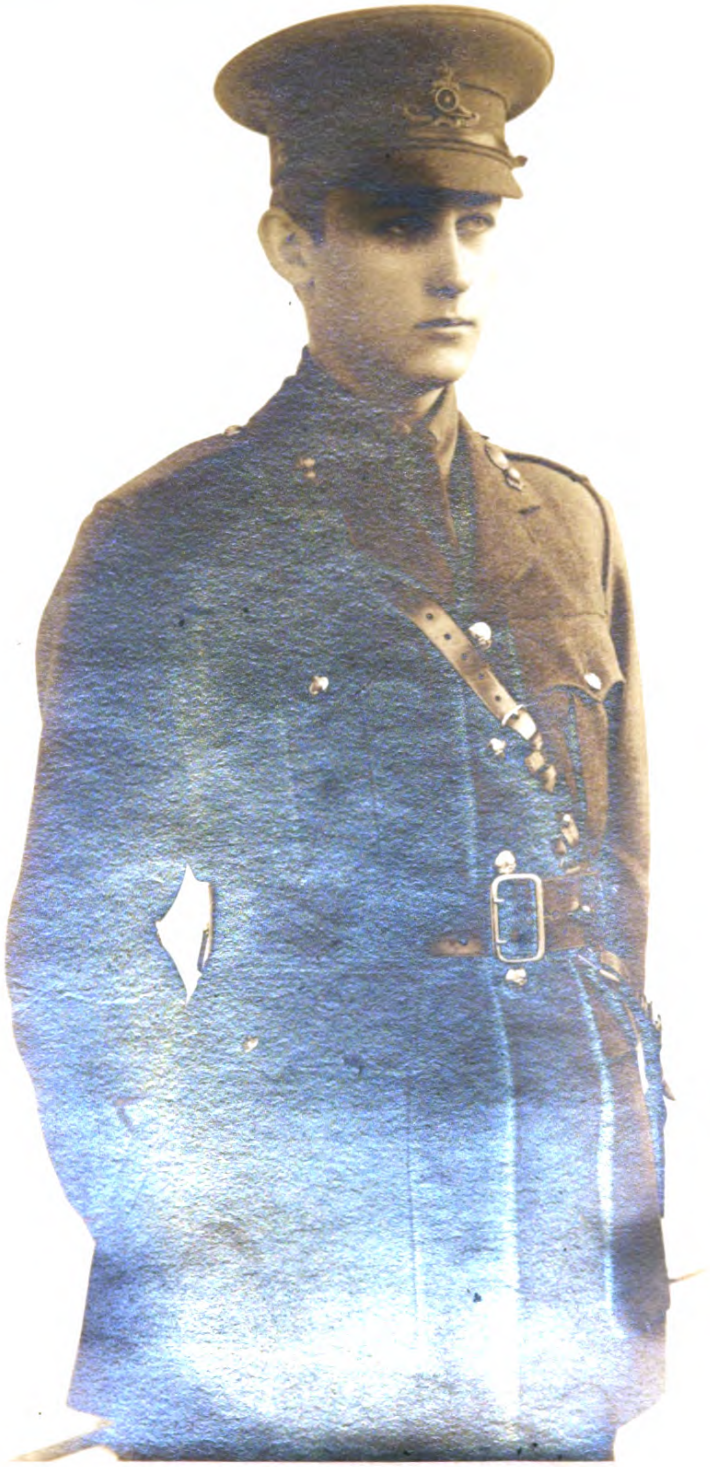

CHRISTIAN CRESWELL CARVER

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FOREWORD

THESE letters are given in full just as they were written; there has been no editing of them, as it was felt by us that any alteration or any holding back would take away from the fresh reality of them as being actually Christian's letters, letters so anxiously looked out for, so eagerly welcomed.

Imaginary initials have been substituted for names in a few instances.

CHRISTIAN CRESWELL CARVER

CHRISTIAN was born July the 5th, 1897 ; he entered Rugby School in September 1911 and left in October 1914, when he passed into the R.M.A., Woolwich. He received his Commission April the 22nd, 1915, and was appointed to the 84th Brigade R.F.A. in the following June.

Royal Military Academy,
Woolwich.
5.3.15.

MY DEAR PROF.,

I hope you made a good speech for the Opposition, which I see from the St. John's College magazine that you represented. I am afraid it is quite inexcusable my not having written before, so I will not waste time in doing so. My own history since we last met has been as follows:—viz:

I got Mumps.

I went up for the Army Exam. on the 21st of September.

I went back to Rugby, and was in the VIth for a month, till I heard that I had passed into Woolwich, 50th out of 100.

I came up to the shop in October, and here I am, a

Corporal, and with 6 weeks to run before we are commissioned.

I am destined for the R.F.A. and so far have enjoyed myself immensely. Cator is here, a Sapper. Kelly [also a Corp.] got a nomination and is also here. We more or less do everything together, I had a room with him for a long time, till we got single rooms, and now we live next door to each other. We ride 4 times a week, and spend the rest of the time in assorted gunnery, sketching and mapping, and Infantry Drill and Tactics. Carver mi was top of the Upper Vth for the half, if you please, and his first term in the form! Disgusting I call it. I have quite reformed and find time to enjoy life, instead of sweating like I did at Rugby. We hope to be at the front any time between this and June; we little thought of this *last* Summer term. I hope when we meet again it may be under as auspicious circs. as those bathing expots. to Brandon, though it is rather a far cry from Brandon to Agra. Kelly sends respects; whenever I mention you, he says "Oh Lard! I MUST write," next time I will see that he does.

Your old time tutored
Cadet Corporal C. C. CARVER.

Heytesbury House,
Heytesbury.
20.6.15.

MY DARLING MUM

I do hope you haven't minded my not writing before, but I simply didn't have time. I had a very good journey down, though a very hot one. I somehow found my way to Divisional Headquarters where I saw a Staff Captain (who knew C. I. and Gilbert Carver in Singapore), and

General Stone, commanding the Artillery. I am posted to the 84th Brigade under Colonel Metcalf, and attached to D Battery. My C.O. is Captain Budden, R.F.A., a very smart and I should say a very nice little man. There are 3 other Subalterns in the Battery, all Temporary but with much more experience than myself. We all sleep in the same room, using our Camp Kit. We are quartered in Heytesbury House, Lord Heytesbury's place. Their names are Philips, Carroll, and Griffin, and they are all very nice fellows. I am rather uncertain as to my position when we go out, as I am only attached, but I have got charge of a subsection at present. We have just come back from manœuvres. We started at 7 A.M. yesterday, bivouacked out and finished 8 A.M., to-day, great fun, but somewhat wearing as we finished at 11 last night, and bucked off at 2 o'clock this morning. This is far better than Weedon as there are nicer fellows, and more interesting work. Tons of love from CRICK.

"D" Battery Office,
84th Brigade, R.F.A.,
18th Divisional Artillery,
Heytesbury Hutments, Heytesbury, Wilts,
and the rest!
29.6.15.

MY DEAR MR. BONHOTE

Thanks very much indeed for your letter. I came across the St. John's College magazine thus wise. It happened that on a Winter's night, I attended one of the Padre's evening services at the "Shop" and seeing that I was the only worshipping, and the night snowy, cold, and chill

withal, the pious man deemed it only fit and hospitable to invite me in to partake of a cup of fragrant mead (coffee to wit). While there I asked him if he knew you. He (not Rev. P. I. T. Crick) said he did, by name, and produced the Magazine in question, which I searched through till I discovered that Prof. E. F. Bonhote had spoken for the opposition! Well, my past history up to date has not been very exciting. We all had 6 days' leave at Easter, and on the 6th day I had German Measles, couldn't go back to the shop, had a fortnight in Devonshire, hastily summoned back to Woolwich by Kelly. Rushed up to town on Tuesday night, packed up and dug out on Wednesday night, commissioned on Thursday, had 11 days at home, and then posted to 4 C. Reserve Brigade, Weedon, 4 miles beyond Daventry, 12 miles from Rugby. I was awfully sorry to part company with dear old Kelly, who got R.H.A. Woolwich, I don't know where he is now. I had 6 weeks at Weedon and was frequently over at Rugby. Standring, Wills, Darby, House mi, Stokes, Brookes, Roberts, Elkin, and of course G. F., the matron and Brett, are still there. Carver mi was 3rd in the XX for the half, that bird's a marvel. Then I came on here to the 2nd Army, and we are just putting on the finishing touches before pushing off for France or the Dardanelles. We were inspected by the King last Thursday, which is usually a pretty sure sign that you will soon be off.

Yours sincerely,

C. C. CARVER, 2nd Lt. R.F.A.

c/o G.W.R.
Just past Salisbury.
26.7.15.

My darling Mum

Here we are off at last. We reach Southampton about 12.30, and will probably embark about 3 o'clock. The crossing takes about 24 hours. Then we have 24 hours at Havre, and then on by train to a Concentration Area, somewhere behind the firing line, which latter I should say we will not get into for at least a fortnight. I wonder what sort of crossing we shall have. It has poured for days on end, and the camp is a sea of mud, so we are all extremely glad to be out of it. Our Brigade is working with the East Kents, East Surreys, and the Queens. Our battery with the East Surreys. I tell you this as I shall not be able to when we get over. Thanks much for Mrs. Kelly's letter, Kelly takes the war just as one knows he is bound to take it. Please tell Dad I have sent off the luggage, bike, and a parcel, and thank him very much from me for the gloves. I shall connect Solar Topées and Southampton when I get there (do you remember the last time we were there). Tons of love from

Christian.

I'll let you know, if I may, about "Northern France."

G.W.R.
11.15 a.m., 26.7.15.

My dear Dad

We have had a fearful rush these last few days, hence my poor correspondence. I sent off the bike, luggage and a parcel. Thanks awfully for the gloves. I must stop now as we are just in to Southampton.

D/84th Bde., R.F.A.,
18th Division, B.E.F.
Thursday, July 28th, 1915.

My darling Mum

Thanks awfully for your letter. We have had a splendid time so far and everything has run very smoothly, including the crossing. We started early Monday and arrived 10 A.M. to-day Thursday. We are well behind the line, but are soon going into reserve, and thence quickly into it. We passed through a certain city not unknown to us last Easter Year, late yesterday afternoon, and disembarked at another large city this morning. The Germans have been in this village, but only for a few hours before the turn of the tide. We had very hard work disembarking off the ship; when we got the horses out I took them to the square in front of the prison ship (crammed with German Prisoners of War). I have never seen a collection of men so absolutely bored. We had the night in rest (?) camp, and pushed on the following day. We are quartered in what is courteously called a Château, but it is really little more than a farm. The number of flies and rats is truly singular (or rather very plural). I should strongly recommend you to get *Blackwood's Magazine* for January and to read the leading article, as, apart from its other merits, it just about applies to us, down to the smallest detail. I should like, if you could manage it, a weekly hamper of Cake, sweets of different sorts, cigarettes, matches, magazines and papers. Could you fix this up, you and Dad, so that if I sent a cheque along every now and then you could take the expenses out of it, and send me along the remainder in notes (preferably French). All such additions to the Mess are very thankfully received and you might spread it abroad among friends

and relatives that all contributions in the literature and eatable line will be thankfully received. I should like the *Bystander*, *Sketch*, and *Punch* and the *London News* weekly, *Blackwood's*, *Nash's*, *Windsor*, and the *Strand* monthly, so perhaps the best arrangement would be a permanent one with the Midland or some old place, and I could pay you. I thought much of Humphrey returning home to-day. I am enjoying France very much indeed, and we have had perfect weather. Tons of love to Dad and Hump, Francis and Ada, from CHRISTIAN.

I will enclose key for my luggage in my next.

D/84th Bde., R.F.A.,
18th Divisional Artillery, B.E.F.
1.8.15.

MY DEAR DAD

We are having a splendid time up to the present. The crossing was like a mill pond, and the 13 hour railway journey not too bad. At present we are in a little village about 15. miles behind the firing line, and some 3 miles from the city of A——, a pleasant place, with a beautiful Cathedral. This little village is the usual thing one finds in this part of the country. A collection of farms, a Church, 2 ponds, some wells, no drainage and a lot of smells. The wily hun was here in September, but was too busy saving his own skin to think about any frightfulness. When we first arrived we were stuck into a rotten place, but we prospected round and have found ourselves an Artilleryman's Arcadia, an Orchard, a raised avenue of lime trees, looking across the plain to A——, under which the men and the Mess sleep, a field for horses, and guns, and what more

could you want. Answer, Water. In England one does not appreciate drinkable water, till one has to drink out of a water cart, with an unmistakable taste of Chlorine. You understand we are now working as a Battery. We are strictly forbidden to say where we are, or whether we have been in action or not, but we move along to-morrow, further up. We had an intersection cricket match this afternoon (Sunday). Thanks awfully for your letters. I am awfully sorry about your rheumatism, it must be absolutely mouldy. Please thank Mum and Humphrey awfully for their letters. Besides the two pieces of luggage and the bike, I sent off a parcel. Tons of love from CHRISTIAN.

A Bit Nearer.
3.8.15.

MY DEAR OLD HUMP

Thanks awfully for your letter. On Monday we moved on 12 miles, away from the neighbourhood of A——, and were told we were going to bivouac that night, and go into action the following night. However the crowd we are relieving have not gone yet, so our particular battery will probably not begin fighting for a week. The Captain and our Senior Sub (a lad called Griffin) went up and saw the position to-day. You see we simply take over the position of another battery, who have just scattered their guns about any old how and covered them up with tarpaulins, so as to look like disused mowing machines I suppose. The men live in caves dug in the roadside. We have got one nice observing station in a wood, but most unfortunately we can't see the whole of the German trench from it, and we have to have 3 in our trench, which is 50 yards from the

German Trench. At present we are in a cornfield (and have made ourselves fairly comfortable) near -u-r-i-u- (the Q soft as in "bathroom"). It is now too dark to write more. Tons of love to all from CRICK.

P.S.—We saw our first glimpse of war yesterday, an Aeroplane being shelled vigorously (I don't know which side it was, but it apparently got away).

Further up still.
5.8.15.

MY BELOVED MUM

They never seem to let us stay in one place, and we have moved on again. We are now (our Battery) attached to a regular Brigade for instruction. The Rt. Section go into action to-morrow night, my lot 2 or 3 days later. This village is not too bad, we have a good place for the men and quite a decent billet for the Officers. We have had a perfect August day to-day. We are missing our English news a lot, as we have had no communications from home for a number of days. I badly want something to read. Thanks awfully for all your letters. I am very anxious to get going. Shots are rare, and matters stalemate here, but "Shell first, shell hard, and keep on shelling" is going to be our motto judging from the noise and flashes last night. Tons of love from CHRISTIAN.

On the banks of the A——.
6.30 P.M. *Sunday*, 8.8.15.

MY DARLING MUM

I am eagerly awaiting the next mail, which has been chasing us round. The last I got from home was post-

marked the 1st. The Rt. Section has gone into action accompanied by Carroll, Griffin, and the Captain. I am left here in charge of the left section. It is not too bad at all. The men have got a very comfortable camp on the river bank where I write this, and much washing and swimming is done, and I had a grand bathe this morning. Personally I am staying at the Mairie, and the Mrs. Mayor provides me with my meals, truly the French are a nation of marvellous cooks. As nobody there can speak a word of English, I am learning French willy-nilly. This is the 4th place our caravan has rested in since we landed. The left section do not go into action till the 13th, but Carroll promised to come down and relieve me, and let me go up to the guns, before that. I have seldom enjoyed anything so much as this first fortnight in France. If only there was not a war on, and I could speak French fluently, it would be simply ideal. I am so full of life and vigour, that the wily Bosche who pushes me out, will have to get up pretty early in the morning, I daresay plenty of them do though. I am extremely short of anything to read, and should be jolly glad of some literature. I have managed to get hold of *The One Before*, Barry Pain, *The Other Side*, by H. A. Vachell and *The New Arabian Nights*, which I have read with gusto. The Chestnut troop have just come and planked themselves in front, beside, and all round us, effectually blocking all exits. They did 13 miles to-day and move on on Tuesday. The Captain's old Battery is at T——, about a mile away. There is jolly little to do here except read, exercise the horses, and censor letters. I am longing for something more from home; mind you all write and send literature to your heart's content! as we shall be in dugouts with nothing to do for days on end.

My address is 2nd Lieut. C. C. Carver, R.F.A., D/84 Brigade, 18th Div. Artillery, B.E.F. Tons of love from

CHRISTIAN.

In the Firing line at last.
10.8.15.

MY BELOVED MUM

I have just got your 2 letters dated 3rd and 5th, for which many many thanks, one does not really appreciate letters till one gets out here. Also I hear that my literature is down at the billet, thanks *awfully* and for the food which was just right, and the paper, etc., thanks tremendously. I write this up with the guns, we have just been doing some firing, and (3 hours later) have just been doing some more. TONS of love from CHRISTIAN.

P.S.—I am with the Battery to-night, and have my first experience of the trenches to-morrow.

In my Dugout.
Tuesday evening, 10.8.15.

MY DEAR DAD

Thanks awfully for all the things you sent, they are just right. We came into action here last night, under somewhat unpropitious circumstances, but have had a splendid day to-day, and have bagged something I hope. Tons of love from CHRISTIAN.

I completely forgot to say thanks awfully for your card dated 6th.

In a Dug out.
10.8.15.

My dear Mott

I hope you enjoyed Camp, and that Camp enjoyed you. Here we are in action at last. Give ear unto the manner in which the left Section came into action. As you know we were on our own at B—— Sur A—— yesterday, Monday, we got unexpected orders to move at 7.45 P.M. last night. Of course in our days one always does anything of importance in the dark. Accordingly "East and West and South and North my messengers rode fast," and we managed to pack up and get away in time, with orders to go into action at once on arrival, after an 8 mile march. I did not know the way and did not think we were expected, which was rather cheering. To add to this an electrical storm was in progress and without exaggeration forked lightning was going on all round the horizon. We got the full benefit of 3 storms and I expected every minute that our ammunition wagon would get struck, and that would have been an end of us. However, we escaped with the memory of one of the most unpleasant nights I hope I shall ever spend. To put the lid on it I overshot the last turning to my destination in the dark, and ran into the arms of some French sentries of no mean zeal. "Où allez-vous, Halte, Halte là." "A S——" (no good evidently for) "Wo gehen Sie," "Hoch der Kaiser—I mean à S——." Crowd of French lads with bayonets collects, but I pacify them, and explain that I want a broad place to "reverser" in. None being forthcoming, we went about on the spot, and greatly to their credit the drivers did it without a hitch. Eventually we found Griffin, and then the Captain, and came into action quite happily and here we are. The dugouts are comfort-

able and each has a bomb proof shelter, the straw roofs of the former harbour large colonies of mice. Please thank the family much for the parcels I have received, one with paper and chocolate another with a variety of delicious things from the Stores, and one from Dad and one from the Footes. Many thanks all but I should like "Zummat read laad." Tons of love from CRICK.

In action, same old place.
I have made extensive enquiry and the weight of evidence goes to show that it is Sunday the 15th.

MY VERY BELOVED MUM

Thanks *awfully* for all your letters. I get at least one from you by each post (usually two of yours and one of Dad's), and I don't 'arf enjize them, not 'arf. We have now had just a week in action, and on the whole have had jolly good sport. We have not properly settled down yet and up to now have been doing 24 hours in the trenches, and 24 hours with the guns, or down at the billet in the village ("The girl in the Taxi"). We have taken over from the French here, and they have dug themselves ripping trenches and made themselves comfortable. The trenches are about 50 yards apart, and things are very quiet, not dull mind you, but comparatively quiet, when you have got used to Snipers, Grenades, Minewerfers, Trench Mortars etc. Of course night is the busy time for the Infantry, but as it's too dark to see Artillery Targets, the Artillery Observing Officer can go to ground and let his battery fire without worrying himself much. They come out into the open a lot during the day, apparently thinking themselves

secure. Friend Fritz is very Blasé down here. We have got a good binoculared periscope, and you can see the number of Hubert the Hun's buttons and how hard he is working etc. When I was up yesterday I "strafed" *one* working party of 12 men with a nice little shrapnel, my Aunt, they went to ground like rabbits. We have not had any shells very near the Battery yet, although they have put them all round. I cannot claim any narrow escapes in the trenches, except (and those hardly hairbreadth) from the ubiquitous Sniper, when one puts one's head above the parapet for too long. The last lot of food, coffee, cocoa, B. Sugar, Peppermints was grand, thanks *awfully*. I am much looking forward to getting some more literature. Please thank Maurice, Hump, and Dad *and* Francis *awfully* for their letters. I will write when I have time. Y. G. de Rezke please in quantities. Tons of love from CHRISTIAN.

In the Trenches.
August 20th, 1915.

MY DARLING MUM

Thank you ever so much for all your letters. Please thank Maurice and Dad for theirs very much too. It makes all the difference getting lots of letters from home, especially such loving ones as I get. Your last letter made me picture everything very clearly. I think spending Uncle Percy's £5 on Literature is a splendid idea. If you could get them for me I should rather like *The Great Tab Dope and other Stories* by Ole Luk-Oie, *Gossamer*, G. A. Birmingham (if it looks good) and *Something Fresh*, by P. G. Wodehouse. I should like some more of that

Lemonade stuff please, as it was very good and I can't stand this beastly "Vin du pays." Also could I have some potted meat, or better, potted Shrimps now and then, as they come in so useful for sandwiches when one is in the trenches. We have had a very quiet time in the trenches to-day, but they shelled us pretty heavily yesterday, partly owing to our Aeroplane Observation Salvos. I have been reading the *Times* and *Spectator* sent by the Footes, you saw of course about the accident to the Irish Mail (I wonder how many times I have seen that go through) at Weedon, and about Colonel Faber marching down with 300 N.C.O.'s and men to render assistance. Curious that it should have happened there wasn't it? I had a very kind letter from Mrs. Napier-Clavering telling me all the family news (Mark is over 6 ft. !) which I have answered. I really must find time to write to—

(*a*) Kelly & L. Smith.
(*b*) Uncle Percy.
(*c*) Uncle Arthur.
(*d*) The Footes.

besides my own "fambly." The letter you were wondering about was from Bonhote, in reply to one from me; considering that it was marked "Agra," had an *Indian* Stamp and that Kelly and Smith are in *France*. I am afraid there are no budding Sherlocks in the family. I am so glad the coat has been found, thus lifting a great weight off my mind (?). Letters etc. are getting to us much quicker now. It makes all the difference in the world to me that you are all enjoying life (I sincerely hope you are) in Devonshire, as nothing bucks one up (not that there is anything to be bucked up from) like a letter describing all

you have been doing. Tons and stacks of love to Dad, H, F, Ada, Aunt D, Mab, Toto (if alive), M, etc. from

CRICK.

In the Trenches.
Tuesday, 17.8.15.

DEAR MR. BRADBY

Just a line to let you know how I am getting on. I have been out here just 3 weeks with D. Battery 84th Brigade R.F.A. 18th Divisional Artillery. The Battery sailed from Southampton on a Monday and we have been in action for just over a week. The Base was pretty awful, most depressing, with German Prisoners and one thing and another; however we soon got out of that and then were on Trek (after detraining) from village to village, for about a fortnight. We have taken over from the French down here, and they have dug themselves comfortable trenches, and the general motto for both sides is "live and let live." I have 24 hours, about every other day, in the trenches observing for the Battery, and at the moment I am theoretically observing. Except for the occasional efforts of the harmless necessary Sniper, you would hardly believe there is a war on. However, there is usually an exchange of hand grenades during the afternoon, and there is a Minewerfer in the neighbourhood (although I believe theoretically destroyed by our Battery the night before last). So far I have been enjoying life considerably, but then things are by no means what they are further up. At present we are waiting for the weather to clear up sufficiently for an Aeroplane to go up and observe our fire on certain objects hidden to us, and then wireless down

results. There's one thing about trench war-fare, you know exactly how you stand, and can do things methodically.

Yours very truly,

C. C. CARVER.

In a Dug Out.
August 20th, 1915.

DEAR MRS. NAPIER-CLAVERING

It was awfully good of you to write, and I enjoyed the family news immensely. I can't get over Mark being over 6 ft., next time I get near a measuring machine I must find out what to be prepared for. We shall have been out a month next Monday (to-day being Thursday I believe). The Battery arrived at our place of departure in 2 detachments, fully primed with manuals and pamphlets, full of copious information and useful hints on "how to do it by one who thinks he knows" sort of idea. On arrival, no single previous arrangement was found to hold good, and after a long and somnolent wait at the dockside, I saw the Battery depart by a large trooper containing all the other officers, all the men except 34 who went with me, all the horses, guns, wagons, and ammunition. I was detailed to cross by a later and faster ship, which arrived some 8 hours before the rest of the Battery. Thus I got a quick crossing, and none of the beastly work of looking after 130 horses all more or less the worse for Mal-de-Mer. Our particular Ocean Greyhound was an ex Isle-of-Man Pleasure Steamer, driven by paddle-wheels, and of no mean swiftness, besides ourselves (some 5 other R.A. subalterns of other Batteries), she carried a lot of infantry, principally officers by the crowd in the saloon. However, the senior

service secured all the upper bunks ; but since all the port holes had to be shut and there were 2 officers (approx) per square foot of saloon, this was not an unmixed blessing and those who crowded out on deck arrived healthier, though chillier men. On arrival, we beguiled the time spent waiting for the remainder of the Battery by assimilating such useful phrases as "Doo pine" etc. The transport arrived at last, everybody looking somewhat mal-de-merish and apprehensive. Vitality was soon restored by the efforts required to get horses who have been 2 days without any exercise down a more or less perpendicular plank some 25 yards in length. All the animals being landed fairly intact, I proceeded to take all the horses and drivers to a place somewhat vaguely described as "The prison yard." Enquiry elicited a guide whose Lancashire dialect was nearly as puzzling as the native French. The prison was a ship and was rather overful of German prisoners, who, by their keen and hopeful interest in us, apparently thought there was a chance for the fatherland yet. We spent the night in rest camp, entrained the following day, started at 4 P.M., detrained at 4 A.M. the following morning, and did a 7 mile march, finally getting into a small and uncomfortable billet in an orchard. Just getting into bed the same evening when a message came. "Be prepared to move at an early hour to-morrow and come into action to-morrow night." No chance of sleep of course, and by furious endeavour we were ready by 2 A.M., as nothing had happened by 2 P.M., we *demobilised*, found ourselves a nicer billet, and looked round for somebody to "Strafe." We moved on after a couple of days to another village, as a Brigade, stayed for a few nights, and then the Battery went on to another village again. From there the right half Battery went up into action, and

I was left on my own with the left half Battery for four or five days. Finally at 3 P.M. on a Monday afternoon I got an order to *marcher* at 7.45 and come into action that night. So we toddled up through a series of thunderstorms, "et nous voiçi." We have got a good Battery position, but no decent observing stations, so we have to have a forward Observing Officer in the trenches the whole time, and up to now I have had about every other 24 hours of it, and I write this letter about 50 yards from Friend Fritz across the way. It is frightfully dull in the trenches and the conscientious Sniper and the occasional Minnenwerfer are the only things which add a little interest and make life worth living. We are supposed to be co-operating with the Infantry, unfortunately the Infantry Colonel does not realize that Trades Union leaders of a certain type, and a sufficient supply of shell are incompatible with one another; and being accustomed to a Belgian Battery, who whizz away anywhere and everywhere at a moment's notice, he *thinks* that by pressing a button he can *plaster* the landscape when and where he likes. Please remember me to all the family, I remain,

Yours very truly,
C. C. CARVER (2nd Lt. R.F.A.).

In the trenches.
23.8.15.
Tuesday.

MY DEAR DAD

Thanks awfully for your letters. I write this while waiting to pepper a large wood in which the Germans have been doing a lot of work lately, they won't be so

enthusiastic in future. Watching the enemy's country through a periscope always reminds me of Alice looking into the looking-glass, and wondering what went on in the parts of the room she just couldn't see. You see the whole country side so clearly, everything so peaceful and still, not a soul in sight and yet just the other side of that parapet any amount of activity is going on, and in this village which looks so deceptively quiet there must be a continual buzz of energy. It is extraordinary what unexpected people one meets here. Coming over on the ship, I met a fellow who was considered one of the most promising Scholars in the School (G. F. B.) just over a year ago; he was certainly one of the least martial. His name is Lucas (or "the Professor"). Again at the witching hour of 4 A.M. the other morning, I wandered into the trenches and found my telephone dugout occupied by breakfast cooking operations in full blast. I expelled the indignant infantryman in charge, and on going round to interview his proprietor, who should I find but Mr. Podmore ("Podders" O.R., G.F.B.) just over a year ago form master of the shell, or L.M. 2, and from whom I learned Caesar, first lesson on Thursday mornings when in U.M. 1. He is now a Captain. We are just going to move on again and join up with our Brigade. The Rt Section go to-night. I sincerely hope my section will follow the following night, as splitting up is a beastly nuisance, and entails a lot of trying work, such as doing 2 days on end with the trenches. Carroll and I do the trench work, and we relieve each other at dusk (about 7 P.M.) the next for duty dining at the Battalion Headquarters. Tons of love to all, from CHRISTIAN.

In the trenches.
24.8.15.
Wednesday 7 A.M.

MY MOST BELOVED MUM

Thanks awfully for your ripping letter dated 20th. You make my mouth water with the description of the Engleheart tea; the one thing that I have a sentimental longing for is a good, solid, English meal. What wouldn't I give for a Weatherbury lunch or dinner, my sainted Aunt! Re dispatches, I got *Cornhill*, thanks muchly, also the daily papers from Footes. By sending it in a wrapper they pay a 1d and by sending it in an envelope they pay 3d, so they have now reverted to the former method. I think I said I should like more biscuits and potted stuffs than sweets, chocolates especially I am overloaded with. Could you please send me some stout Khaki thread, some boot polish, and some button polish (the soldier's friend, or pearl, but not a liquid one), and also a clothes brush. The trenches are awful for tearing your clothes, they are so narrow and there are so many pieces of wire and sticks projecting. The Right Section left for our new position with our own Brigade last night. I have consequently been observing since 4 A.M. yesterday morning, but I managed to get from 12 M.N. to 6 A.M. sleep last night. I had tea yesterday with 2 subalterns in the D.C.L.I. (Duke's of Cornwall) and dinner with C Company mess, East Surreys, the latter, 3 extremely nice fellows. I slept there last night, and hope to breakfast there this morning. We had a great shoot last night at some working parties in a wood on our right, so yesterday we fixed up a combined shoot with the 37th Howitzer Battery, when they came out last night. Unfortunately Fritz was so cautious that much to

my disappointment I was unable to open fire. It was good news about the Russian Victory in the Baltic. I hope it will buck them up a bit. *Tons* of love from CRICK.

In the O.S.
28.8.15.

MY VERY VERY BELOVED MUM

Thanks awfully for your letter. I am afraid nothing in this world will ever make my writing decipherable. You might tell the fountain from which all good things flow that what one needs is a *few* sweets, and cigarettes. Biscuits, cake, and potted stuff, (tinned fruit is always useful). This new place is much better than our old one, as you don't have to be in the trenches the whole time, More anon. *Tons* of love from CRICK.

P.S.—Would you mind forwarding these to my Uncles.

In our Observing Post.
28.8.15.

MY DEAR OBSQUOTTI-ONE

Thanks beaucoup for your letter. Our little trek came off quite successfully and here we are settled in our new position. In our last place we relied upon concealment to deceive harmless, noisy little Fritz, but here brute force is the order of the day. The Brigade are more or less together, in line. Each gun has a young pyramid over it, made of great logs, and about 4 feet of earth on top, and any amount at the sides, which should be proof against direct hits by anything less than Jack Johnsons. In the midst of all this power, Carroll and I sleep under a so-called

shelter composed of 7 hurdles! The great advantage of this place is that one has got a splendid observing station about a ¼ of a mile in front of the Battery, and one doesn't have to spend the whole time in the trenches. The only thing is that earnest, careful, methodical little Fritz has got both the Observing Station, and the guns exactly located, and when "A" Battery had a shot at the supposed site of one of his batteries, he replied with such good effect that he got a direct hit on the Officer's dug-out, and spoiled the soup for dinner by filling it with dust, it is that sort of thing which brings the horrors of war home to one: awful. I have only seen one casualty so far, a man hit in the throat by a sniper, a very messy spectacle. We have had hot and cloudless weather now for nearly a week; my super-sainted Aunt, I would give a month's pay to have a jolly good bathe: I can hardly bear to think of it. I think I told you I should rather like *Gossamer*, by G. A. Birmingham; *The Great Tab-Dope and Other Stories*, by Ole Lukoie; *Something Fresh*, by P. G. Wodehouse, etc. I am rather stuck for something to read at present as I have not yet received my monthly magazines. Otherwise one needs a few sweets, cigarettes, biscuits, and potted things. You have all been most awfully good in sending things out to me. Please thank Mum and Aunt Dora awfully for the two cakes, shortbread, and barley sugar. *Some* cake, I can tell you, and extremely welcome. As Griffin is now a permanency at the wagon line, I am trying to do the house-keeping for the rest of us. The difficulty is more getting things to cook with, than getting things to cook. *Tons* of love to all from

C. C. CARVER (2nd Lieut., R.F.A.).

In the Observing Post.
8 o'clock A.M.
31.8.15.

MY VERY DEAR MUM

Thanks awfully for your letter, and B. Price's enclosure. I do enjoy hearing about everything you are seeing and doing awfully; I can see it all so clearly. At present we are distributed as follows: The four guns are each under a young pyramid, behind a crest, which hides us from the Bosches; the gunners live with the guns. The Captain, Carroll, and I also live up near the guns, in dug-outs. Griffin is in charge of the Waggon line and lives in luxury, more or less. Our Observing Station is about a quarter of a mile in front of the Battery, over the crest. This is a typical day in our present existence. Get up at 5.30 and go to the Observing Station. Observe, read and write letters till about 9.30, when Carroll comes up to relieve me. Have breakfast, and spend the morning at the Battery, superintending digging, possibly doing some firing (registering points in our Zone), otherwise do some reading or any old thing which turns up. Have lunch (biscuits and cake), and after lunch I might go up to the Observing Station and do some registering, or I might run down to the Waggon line which is in a village in rear and have a look at the horses and drivers. We leave the Observing Station at about 7.30 P.M., and have dinner at 8 (if lucky), then there is some clandestine digging going on (a trench for telephone wire), which has to be superintended, and so to bed. We usually get some Taubes over during the day, and perhaps 20 shell ("Whizz Bangs"). We would probably fire about 15 rounds or so per day. I don't often get a ride. I have received the *Great Tab Dope*, which

was extremely welcome, and I hope to get some magazines soon. We have had very wet weather lately, which is a nuisance, as it makes the trenches so beastly, and one has to sleep in a damp dug-out. I should rather like some almonds and raisins for the Mess, those and cakes etc., are really better than too many sweets, of which I have got tons now. Well, au revoir, and the best of luck from

CHRISTIAN.

P.S.—I had a line from Leslie yesterday, he says he is digging trenches behind a town, which I can see quite close on our left.

P.S.—Since this morning I have discovered two urgent needs—a ripping little teleph—I mean, two R.A. hat badges (I have lost mine) obtained of any tailor; and if you could get me a pair of waders, they would be worth their weight in gold.

In our Observing Post.
3.9.15, 10.40 A.M.

MY DEAR DAD

Thanks awfully for your letters, I am afraid it is some time since I wrote, but I lose count of who I owe letters to. We have had a lot of cold wet weather these last few days and there is mud, mud everywhere, and in the trenches much mud. There are a lot of holes dug in the sides to catch beetles, mice, frogs, toads, etc., and as you wade along through the mud, every now and then you go into one; beastly. There is no doubt we much prefer shells to rain, you can at least get away from shells. I had a line from Leslie the other day, telling me where he is, curiously enough he cannot be more than a mile or so from here. On our left is what was once a prosperous

little county town, with a Cathedral, with a tall spire. It is in ruins now and the top of the spire has been badly hit, so that it hangs down grotesquely without being actually broken off. I expect it will be a great curiosity after the war. About a mile south of . . . (my mistake) is a little village, where our Wagon line is. East from this runs a broad shallow valley, with a cart track, and to the left of the track, i.e. on the Northern slope of the Valley is our Battery position. Over this N.E. to S.W. crest is our O.P. where I am now and from it you get a splendid view. In front, on the forward,[1] And downward slope of the hill, is a coarse clover field, then in the valley Lies a wriggling white line, with others running back from it, these Being communication trenches, the long one is the fire trench ; about 50 yards farther on are the Enemy trenches, running twist for twist with ours. Fritz's trenches run partially Round and through the outskirts of a small village or rather the remnant There is of one. Behind the village is a large wood and beyond that again a still larger wood running back to the skyline. On either side coarse pasture land with occasional clumps of trees, and small woods, the whole country slightly undulating, and intersected by sunken and invisible roads. Up to now we have had an opposite number enemy battery in a hedge running away from the farther wood. He always gives us shot for shot when we shell their trenches, and if we persist puts in a consignment of cheap common shell (percussion fuze only) from 100 to 50 yards short of the Battery. Harmless, but it adds a little excitement to the trivial round, especially as fuzes and bits of iron hum, screech and whizz over, landing with suggestive "plops."

[1] "Letters in capitals form word 'Albert,' beginning with 'And downward.'"

He tried it on the other day when I was firing the Battery. None of your "Burning deck" stunts for me, armed as I was with nothing better than a megaphone; I got into a gun pit double quick! Yesterday, however, we couldn't stir him up anyhow, and from the day before yesterday evening till the present moment he hasn't fired a shot. Whether he has moved, or whether he has used up his week's ammunition, or is saving up for someone's birthday I couldn't say, but we shall soon know. I have enjoyed the books which were sent me awfully. I should strongly recommend you to read *The Great Tabdope* by Ole Lukoie (eye witness, Col. Swinton) it is even better, to my mind, than the *Green Curve*. I also much enjoyed *Minnie's Bishop*, and am looking forward much to *In Mr. Knox's Country* and *Home Life in France*. Carroll has much enjoyed *J'accuse!* and tells me I ought to read it. Colonel Leaver is just reading and recommends the *Book of France*. I wish Kipling would bring out something new, and I am much looking forward to receiving the month's magazines. It is most awfully good of you to send me all these things, I hope it is not a great tax on you. One gets money out here by signing for it at the Field Cashier's, but the latter is extremely elusive. By the way I should be awfully grateful if you would get me a pair of really good waders. They are absolutely *the* things for the trenches, and would be *invaluable*. I will send you cheque if you could let me know if they are to be got. Well, good-bye for the present and tons of love to all from CRICK.

P.S.—The first letters on the 1st five lines on page 2 may help you as to my whereabouts.

In our O.P.
3.9.15, 11.45 A.M.

MY DARLING MUM

Thanks awfully for your letter, and the top-hole heather, which arrived in splendid condition. I have enjoyed all the books awfully. We have had a quiet day to-day (to-date) and yesterday. I daresay they will wake up this afternoon. For news see my letter to Dad, such as it is (both news and letter). Tons of love from CHRISTIAN.

D/84.
B.E.F.
6.9.15.

MY DEAR OBSQUOTTI

Thanks awfully for your letters (I can't recollect any at the moment, but I am sure you've written anyhow do if you haven't). We have just survived two rounds "hate" from Fat Fritz, owing to our registration on a new piece of his trench. The "hate" takes the form of a distant bang, then whooooooooo BANG! large fountain of earth 25 yards in front of battery while bits of shell, fuze, stones, etc., whistle over head, accompanied by shrieks (of laughter), and groans (of derision), from the great untouched, meanwhile the Huns write home to say they have annihilated another battery, England *must* get exhausted soon. I had a very interesting day in the O.P. yesterday, as it was very clear and the Germans relieve their trenches on Sunday. Through the telescope you could see them sweating uphill in marching order and then getting on bikes at a certain place, and riding off. We got a note the other evening

from the Sappers telling us that they were "pooping off," a mine at 7.30. "Good," we said, "Just time to see it before dinner." Off we went to a convenient spot on our right flank. Imagine a wet, cold evening, just not quite dark, and ourselves waiting to see a few Huns propelled skywards, do you envy us our harmless little pleasures? Prompt at 7.30 two dirty looking flames appeared on the horizon, accompanied, or rather followed by a horrible tearing, crackling noise, then about a dozen magnesium lights, from the huns showing the place covered in dense clouds of smoke, finally a great burst of rifle fire, from both sides. It is like throwing in the ball from touch. Both sides try for the crater, but of course the side whose touch it is has a distinct advantage. At this juncture the whizz-pht! WHIZZ-PHT! of stray bullets became so unpleasantly numerous that we decamped to our dinner, not without haste. How are you getting on with the old bus? I was frightfully nervous at the old dear at first. There are 2 ways, and 2 only of starting her. (1) Put in the clutch, inject petrol, lift the exhaust, put the near pedal as close to the ground as possible, turn on the oil, and push until she miss-fires. Then drop exhaust (still pushing) and get on by pedal.

(2) If she is still sulky, put her on the stand, inject the deuce of a lot of petrol, turn on oil. Then stand on pedals, and pedal until she is running free, and, while pedalling, drop exhaust, and race engine till hot. All this bores you frightfully, but it may be useful. The Piston goes through 4 motions,

down, Induction (from Carburettor).
up, Compression.

This is where spark appears.

down, Firing (this is what drives the machine).
up, Exhaust.

and so on over again. You must push her through these 2 or 3 times before she can possibly fire. By simply shoving down the pedal you cannot do this, at least it is a matter of luck whether the engine is in the right position. For all that is said against motor bikes, they teach you independence, and if you start with enough money for train fares, or repairs, you can go where, when, how, and as far as you like. I heartily commend you to her, you can never get bored with the B.S.A. to fall back on! I am enjoying my books, and Mags immensely. The *Blackwood's* is a top hole good paper, I should read it if I were you. Well, so long and the best of everything from

CRICK.

P.S.—Just received your letter, thanks awfully.

D/84.
6.9.15.

MY BELOVED MUM

Thanks hugely for your letter dated Sept. 3rd. I have enjoyed the books and Mags *awfully*. I must say the *Blackwood's* is well worth the 2/6 one pays for it. Talking about paying, I do not see why my colossal (!) income should be doing nothing, and why it should not pay for literature and supplies when Uncle P's £5 is expended (as I expect it is by now), so if I send you some blank cheques you and Dad could fill them up, could you not?

After Dinner. I have completely forgotten, what I meant to tell you. I am sure it wasn't important. We have had a lovely day to-day. Well, good-night, my

darling Mum and thanks awfully for all the books and Luz Cotidiana, and *tons* of love to Dad and Hump, I hope to write to them in the small hours of to-morrow morning, when I am on the "England is watching" show.

CRICK.

P.S.—Thanks awfully for shaving glass, potted meat, etc., most acceptable je vous assure.

In the O.P.
7.9.15.

MY DEAR HUMP

Thanks Beaucoup for your letters, and ayez la bonté d'excuser moi for not replying before. After a lot of beastly wet we are at last having some fine weather. Hot in the day time and jolly cold at night, and early morning. Things still jog along quietly enough, and neither of us seem to do much harm, which is an obvious development. If you hurt Fritz, he hurts you and that is simply unnecessary wastage. Carroll and I have decided we must have a Battery Gramophone so I have written to Harrod's for a catalogue. I hope it (the phone) will arrive all right. At present we live with C Battery, as they have to dig their own quarters, and have not finished yet. One of their Subalterns has got a very decent gramophone, so you often hear Fritz bombarding to the strains of "Tha-a-at Mysterious Ra-a-gtime!" or some other classic. Well au revoir. T.O.L. from CRICK.

In the O.P.
7.9.15, 7.30 A.M.

MY DEAR DAD

Many thanks indeed for your letter. Very little has been going on here. An occasional Aeroplane duel, a few

shells about 25 yards short of the Battery, an occasional shoot over the enemy's country, and that completes the trivial round. Of course, in the event of an attack by either side we should have more to do, considerably more, but I am not allowed to say anything about that. Thanks awfully for the shaving glass, Cigarettes, etc., I don't know what I should do without such an efficient headquarters to fall back on. I must have got a pretty good credit at Cox's as when I left England, I had got £54 and since then I have only drawn out 125 francs. I shall want about £60 after the war I expect to get my dress uniform etc. Much love from CHRISTIAN.

P.S.—I enclose a cheque to carry on the papers and food.

D/84.
11.9.15.

MY DEAR DAD

Thanks awfully for your letter dated 7th. The Cigarettes are very nice indeed, and the waders sound just the thing, though I daresay I shall need the heavier sort later on in the year. I should be rather glad of another of those tin cases of matches, and some more paper. We have been having lovely, cloudless weather lately, with an East wind. I am glad the expedition to "Castle bromeg" was a success. I can imagine the spirit of it exactly. I went down to the trenches yesterday for the first time since we left -u-a-n-[1] (which latter place reminds one of the famous song from "The Girl in the taxi,"

-u-a-n-, -u-a-n-,
we love you to a man

[1] Suzanne.

we sigh for you, we die for you,
my sweet -u-a-n-,
By night, by day, all we can say,
how can man without -u-a-n-).

The trenches of both sides run through a village, though perhaps the former inhabitants would hardly recognize it now. Much love from CHRISTIAN.

D/84th.
11.9.15.

MY DARLING MUM

Thanks as toujours for your many ripping letters, which I much enjoy (usually over our sumptuous evening repast). I am so glad the day at Castle Bromwich was a success. That last remark sounds the acme of forced interest, I always think, but in this case it isn't. I got into the middle of a lump of hate this morning, but escaped with some rubbish down my neck. I knew I should get it in the neck sooner or later. We have been having the most perfect weather imaginable lately, top hole for observing. The captain has been up in a plane to-day for three hours, observing our fire. I hope to get up some time. *Tons* and TONS of Love, from CRICK.

D/84.
13.9.15.

MY VERY DARLING BELOVED MUM

Thanks ever so much for your letters dated 8th (at Repertory) and 10th. I have had a top-hole mail, those two from you, one from Aunt Kitty, a paper, two parcels addressed by Footes, and a parcel from the Stores. *Re*

papers, I should rather like the *Birmingham Daily Post*, or whatever it is called, as local news is really the most interesting. I write this at 5.35 P.M. and at 5.45 P.M. there is going to be a "Strafe." An intrepid lad called Ellis, a Battery Commander (the inevitable Ellis as Carroll calls him) has smuggled up one of his guns to within 200 yards of a beastly little hot bed of a Sniper's Gallery. They are going to loose off 30 rounds, and then run for their lives (if there are still any to run for), rather a sporting effort, what? There he goes now. The Strafe is not likely to be entirely one-sided, and I daresay we shall chip in. It is a beastly place, both trenches run through a wood, our half is called Bois Français, theirs Bois Allemand, and in the middle the trenches meet and we share the parapet, this is an absolute fact. You can imagine it is a jumpy place at night and very often a mine goes up to add to the general festivity, and in the excitement of the moment the Germs drop a shell or so into our trenches, and then we give 'em some back, but not very much for we have to be *very* careful of our ammunition. (Pause to take breath) The Strafe is all over as far as we are concerned, and the Huns only replied by two miserable Whizz Bangs on Battalion H.Q., though no doubt they are maturing some awful frightfulness or other. We spotted the flashes and smoke of a heavy Battery yesterday, but they are unfortunately out of range. Who do you think is attached to B Battery? No less a person than FORSHALL! We little thought that first term at Rugby in "Buggy's," which way our roads would lead. We have heard a lot of rumours lately of the Dardanelles being forced, which are probably as unreliable as most rumours are. We get most of our topical information from the "Intelligence Summary" issued by Corps

Headquarters, containing information from prisoners, extracts from German comic(?) and other (frequently decidedly comic) papers, etc., often very amusing. A L.-Cpl. and a man took four prisoners the other night, just to our left. We got the result of a conversation with one of them (an Officer) this morning. He did not like the idea of gas and had not heard of any near here. Their troops seem to be much the same in comfort and moral as ours. Casualty lists were to be bought. Wouldn't say whether casualties on Russian front were heavy as reported. "Altogether seemed a modest, straightforward, unassuming fairly intelligent little man." Would they were all such, nevertheless "the German Militarist" becomes a very human creature when you get to within 50 yards or so of him. The Glorious Weather looks like breaking at last, and I shall probably be glad of the waders before long.

Tons of love to you, my dearest Mum, from

CRICK.

D/84.

6.30 P.M., 13.9.15.

MY DEAR ADA,

Thanks so much for your letter; I think the last one you wrote was my first term at Naish, wasn't it? *Sic transit.* We are really very comfortable out here. We sleep in a dugout, *i.e.* a large cave dug in the chalk which predominates round here, and roofed in with large tree trunks. I hope we shall make it quite snug when we have boarded in the walls a bit. If we stay here all winter we might get a stove for it. We feed in another dug out, a "palatial" one as the *Daily Mirror* would call it, with a kitchen adjoining it, so constructed that if you want any of

the servants it is a physical impossibility to make them hear. At any rate, both rooms are found very acceptable by the local rats and mice who apparently exist in boundless numbers, especially the latter. I am the family housekeeper, which means that after breakfast I approach the cook in fear and trembling to order dinner, lunch, etc., I am always afraid of dropping some awful brick. I have just been approached by the cook to tell me he can't make the Rissoles to-night because Fuller has forgotten to get the eggs (we live and learn, I never knew before that one made Rissoles with eggs). I enclose rather an amusing note sent in frantic haste by the sister at the Hospital to Uncle John. My clothes are lasting much better now I am not in the trenches so much, where there is always something sticking out to rend your garments in twain (or thereabouts). I don't know what I shall do for new coats and breeches if I need them. I suppose I had better get measured here, and send the measurements home.

Much love from

CHRISTIAN.

D/84.

7 P.M., 13.9.15.

DEAR 'OWD OOMFREY

Much gratitude for your jolly letter, and so sorry for not answering before, but it always "juist slippit awa'." We have been leading a comparatively quiet life lately, so there is not much to record (obviously). It is principally spade work (literally), for those on high, of the hats of Brass, have decided that this position is a bit too hot, and we have got to shift a bit, which means digging new gun pits, telephone

trenches, etc. In this we are inclined to agree with them, as the Huns must have spotted our Battery from an Aeroplane, and now when anyone fires from behind this crest, they think it is us and deal with us accordingly. It has been harmless so far, but accidents will happen, "in the latter end." By the way the authors (E. O. E. Somerville and Martin Ross) of *Some Experiences of an Irish R.M.*, *In Mr. Knox's Country* etc., which I have just read, are the people who wrote and illustrated *Slipper's A.B.C. of Fox Hunting*, and Slipper "I is meself, no great shakes as ye see," occurs frequently in their books.

Tons of love to you, Dad, and Mott from

CHRISTIAN.

D/84.
19.9.15.

MY DARLING MUM

I feel an awful brute for not writing before, but time slips along in the most extraordinary way. I think it is the fact of having no Sunday that makes one lose count of time. We have been splitting up again (the Brigade) and B and C Batteries have gone. We stay where we are and take on the Zone on our left. It is smaller and not so interesting. We have to do F.O.O. in the trenches now, which is annoying, particularly as you can't see anything from them. The Huns have been making nuisances of themselves with Aerial Torpedoes lately. They are diabolical things, particularly as you can't spot where they come from. We are having an officer attached to us for a fortnight. He should have arrived yesterday but has not done so yet. Thank you most awfully for all the books, I am getting quite a young library, so you might go slow for the present.

I am reading, and much enjoying *Tommy and Co.* at present. About sandbags, we are using about 1000 a week for our Battery alone, and can get all we want in this particular spot. I should wait a bit till the W.O. asks for them which they will do soon. More anon. Tons of love from

CRICK.

In the Trenches.
Saturday,
25.9.15.

MY VERY BELOVED MUM

I feel a brute, Mark I, for not writing before, my only excuses being lack of time and unsuitable environment. I have been in these —— trenches since Tuesday morning, since when I have not had clothes or boots off. It has rained for three days, and I have just received ½ cwt of earth down my neck. Quelle vie! But I remain cheerful. At present we are bombarding merrily. Considerable changes, and some thrilling prospects are in view. Let's hope it comes off. Especially as until it does I am tied down here. Fortunately we are building some new gun pits quite close behind here, and I make that the excuse to trot out and take the air at least twice a day. It is a very jolly spot, I think, and I am very interested in it. We are building a dummy hedge to screen us from Fritz, and we shall probably dash in, bang off a thousand rounds and exit, it being a question of minutes before he gets on to us, and after that —, well we hope so, anyhow. I see the Captain and Griffin most days, and this morning I saw Carroll which I was glad of. He told me there was a parcel for me, so I expect that is No. 1, muchas grathias (spelt wrong no doubt).

Also thanks *awfully* for all your letters, it makes all the difference, take it from me. TONS of love from

CHRISTIAN.

P.S.—Just received yours of 21st. Many thanks. Please tell Dad the waders are splendid.

In the O.S.
30.9.15.

MY VERY BELOVED MUM

Thanks awfully for your letters. I shall be able to write more, now that I am out of the trenches for a bit. I got the "Force" parcel this morning, thanks awfully for it. I hope you will forgive me if I don't acknowledge a lot of things. It is not ingratitude, but I have such a lot to thank you for that I can't remember everything. Could you send me out some thick shirts and underclothes, and a Khaki muffler as it is turning distinctly chilly. It feels quite like holidays being up at the Battery. Please don't think I am not enjoying life. I am. Of course if you subconsciously try and read between the lines of my brainless scrawls to find some indication that my young life is being blighted, you are bound to hit on something. I can tell you I extract the maximum of enjoyment out of things in general, and that is not a little. I was very sorry to see that James and Wigstone, quite 2 of the best fellows of the 3rd East Surreys at our last place, have been wounded. It is funny, the quaint people one runs across here. One of the Subs of the "Queens" who I was with when I first went to the trenches, knew Philip at Uppingham, and who do you think I met yesterday? P. G. Heath of all people on earth; in the 8th E. Surreys! His brother, in the same Regiment (R. Heath), is a mining officer here. I had seen and talked

with him a lot, before I found out who he was. I have been reading an awfully interesting account of the cavalry operations all round here, by the French Cavalry, this time last year, Sept. 13–Sept. 30th. We get all the news from North and South, very quickly here. The "Blotting Paper" letter was written on the blotting paper in front of this pad by mistake, which makes me laugh. Idiotic. *Re* books, I should rather like, *Salt of the Sea*, which is in my shelf somewhere, and I am rather keen on C. G. D. Roberts books *Feet of the Furtive* etc. OH! by the way, to dispell another illusion, nobody told me I must smarten up, but I ran out of the polishes I brought out with me. Tons of Love to all from CRICK.

Could you send me *A tall Ship* by Bartimeus, and a pair of gloves (actual).

D/84.
30.9.15.

MY DEAR OBSQUOTTI

Thanks awfully for your letters and cheapness.

I am now back at the Battery after a 9 day spell in the trenches. Well, old bird, my very heartiest congratulations on getting into the VIth, mind you make a good piece of work of it. If I were you I would not identify myself too much with the Z, X, element. They are good fellows doubtless, but haven't got the guts to make good VIths, and they don't stand for the type which raises a school or house to better things, which you, as a Carver, must do. I don't know why I am jawing like this, but the mood is on me, so hear me out. You know dear old Dad expected great things of me when I got into the VIth, and he will expect them doubly of you, since I never had the chance.

Don't think "I am much too insignificant to do any good, I had better lie as low as possible," even if others do. Your job is to do your bit in piloting the house in the right way, and working with and for the head of the House and G.F. I shouldn't give all your time, interest, and energy to work. Before you get into the VIth the best thing you can do for the school and the house, is to go the right way, and work as well as you can. After you get into the VIth you have to work for the house as well, and all too many work for themselves only, and so commit the most dangerous, because it is the least apparent, to some indeed non-existent, form of selfishness. I can see now that that is where I made my mistake. Don't forget that it is not "Triumph or Disaster," those two impostors, that matter, or by which the house is judged. It is the ultimate tone of the house that matters. If it goes down you and I *share the blame*, if it goes up, as well it may, you share the credit, which the world never sees, but which only we of the school can give. *Personal* achievements matter little now, and nothing in 10 years' time. The only people whose opinions matter are those who know where to look, and *they* are not likely to express them. Excuse this pi-jaw. Tons of love from

CHRISTIAN.

In the O.S.
30.9.15.

MY DEAR DAD

Here I am back again at the Battery after 9 days in the trenches, and jolly glad I am to be back. This explains why I have been such a rotten correspondent lately, as it is impossible to write a decent letter in the trenches. Thanks very much for your letters, the waders are very useful

indeed, and I much enjoy the cigarettes. I wonder if you would mind sending J. H. Steward, 406, Strand, London, a 9d. (!) Postal Order from me. I wrote for refill for a torch, enclosing 2/-. Apparently with package and postage it comes to 9d. more. I had a very interesting, though a very muddy stay in the trenches. We had a pretty sharp bombardment for half an hour, the evening we arrived. About 10 minutes later we got a message "Enemy advancing ½ left." I hastily filled my revolver, and turned the Battery on, ready. After two hours it appeared that the "enemy" was only a small party sent over by the Huns to see what we were doing, while our heads were still tucked in after the bombardment. Nevertheless it is as well to have your revolver ready, as the night before last one of the officers I was living with walked round a corner and nearly into a German sitting on the parapet looking in! Thinking that Fritz was probably armed with bombs he hastily retired, but by the time he got his revolver going, he had decamped, doubtless very pleased with himself. The Germans just here have been very comic lately. After we had been strafing them a good bit, they put up a large notice with "Chuck it!" written on it. They love putting up targets, and signalling a miss for every shot fired. Yesterday they put up a row of eight stones on their parapet, and a Sergeant-Major who is a crack shot, started knocking them off from right to left. After he had done four, they picked up the rest and threw them at us! Under all this, however, there always runs the tragic vein. While I was down there, there were about twelve casualties among the men. When I got in from digging, about 11 o'clock one night, I was told that one of the officers, an awfully nice fellow, called Thorne, had been badly hit out on patrol, and that they

were trying to get him in. He had gone out with one "Bomber" to try and settle a troublesome sniper, when almost on the German wire they ran into a German patrol. One of them fired a revolver at Thorne, the bullet going through his shoulder and both lungs. The whole thing so jolted the man with him that he rushed back for help. They tried to get him in four times during the next three hours, under heavy machine gun fire. A Sergeant (recommended for D.C.M.) going out all four times and a private, arrived from England two days before, who had never been under fire in his life, insisted on going out, went further than anyone else, and stayed out 10 minutes longer. Finally they had to give it up, and went and told his elder brother, Rugger blue and International, a machine gun officer, a little further along the line. He at once came down and went out to find him, accompanied by his servant. By some extraordinary chance he walked right into a shell hole where he found his brother and carried him in. They put him on my bed, but he had been dead several hours, poor chap.

The weather is turning colder and I shall soon want some thicker shirts and underclothes sent out. Much love from CHRISTIAN.

In the O.P.
4.10.15.

MY DARLING MUM

Thanks awfully for all your letters, and enclosures. This Strafe seems to have upset the posts a lot, for I have not received any weekly papers for some time and only 1 Magazine (Nash's). I have very much enjoyed the "Force." I should rather like some more, say 4 packets, and some

cocoa. We go into reserve to-morrow, for a fortnight, which means a respite from the trenches, which I am not sorry for. It is a pretty mouldy day to-day, very rainy and misty. Excuse this wretchedly dull and selfish scribble, but the change of weather has given us all harmless colds, and I for one feel phenomenally stupid. *Tons* of love to Ada and Francis and mountains to you from CRICK.

In the O.P.
4.10.15.

MY DEAR DAD

Thanks awfully for your letter. No, we were not in the show, left and right of us, although we fully expected to be, and are disappointed, that there is apparently nothing doing, for the present at any rate. I am afraid there is very little news, and everything is going on pretty normally. We go into reserve to-day, for a fortnight, which means that we probably won't do any firing, and, which is excellent, we don't have to have an F.O.O. Griffin has just got his second star, which he has been promised since last January! We begin to get leave on the 26th of this month. That is we start at the top, and work right through. Probably about 8 days each, and not more than one from the Brigade at a time. There are about 25 Officers in the Brigade and I am the junior but one, so I ought to get leave in about 6 months' time! However perhaps they will let more than one go at a time, and much may happen between now and then. I have got tons of cigarettes now, so don't want any more just at present. Tons of love from

CHRISTIAN.

D/84th Brigade, R.F.A.,
B.E.F.
(Our proper address now).
6.10.15.

My beloved Mum

Thanks muchas for your daily letters. I can hardly bring myself to believe that I am in France, at war, after reading them. *A Tall Ship* is a *top notch* book, quite up to *Naval Occasions*. Carroll and I enjoyed it awfully. The former is now reading *Quinney's*. I write this after dinner. Here is a complete résumé of my day. Called at 7.30, 7.45, 8.0, and arose at 8.15. Abluted, dressed and had breakfast (porridge, bacon and eggs, tea, marmalade). During the morning superintended the construction of alternative gun pits and laboured with a pick. Partook of a light lunch, and heavily of accessories (chocolates, "parmenas," dates etc.). During the afternoon did nothing to speak of, but read. Had tea, did nothing elegantly till dinner. Menu,

Soup Oxo,
Bœuf Rôti (2 Veg)
Apple Charlotte.
Grapes, Dates, Figs, Raisins, Chocolates, Biscuits, Ginger,
etc., *ad lib.* Lime Juice and Soda,

and so shortly to bed, having done jolly little to earn my 11/-. Griffin and the wagon line have got a jolly good billet in a large mill (water, working merrily). I went down to see him yesterday, and went for a ride afterwards to A——, sight seeing. And it is a sight indeed. No picture or description can convey the extraordinary impression of the holy figure, beaten down, but unbroken, holding out the Saviour towards the stricken city. Well, au revoir, ma chérie,

Christian.

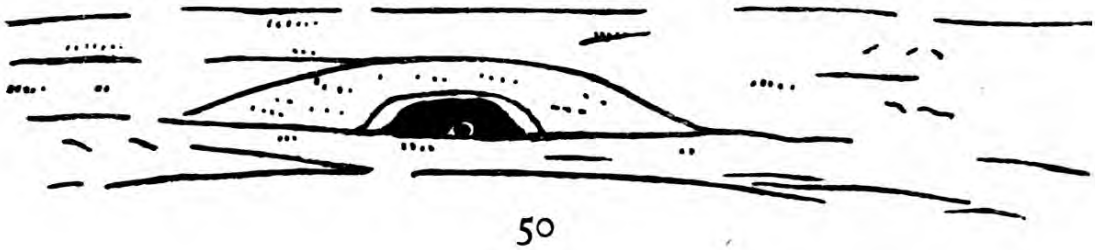
In the O.S.
Sunday, October 10th.

MY VERY DARLING MUM

Thanks awfully for the letters, and for No. 3 parcel, in which everything was very welcome. It is a perfect day here, although one can feel the autumn is in the air. We have been having rather misty, foggy weather lately, not at all unlike a certain kind of Harborne day. Carroll and I went for a ride yesterday, by way of a change. I have got a new pony now, as the Captain has got back the polo pony he brought over from India with "Q" R.H.A., and passed this one on to me. He is a nice little black, and very full of beans just at present. We retraced our steps to the second village we stopped at, after detraining at A—S. It seemed a very long time ago, and we seemed to have travelled a much longer way, than we did in reality. The horses were very fresh, and nearly pulled the arms out of us. We had some top hole gallops. We had tea at a place in H—Y

"TEA SALOON FOR OFFICERS
Champagne-Wine,
Confectioner-Pastry,
Various Article,"

as the sign announces. Most of our work now is digging alternative gun pits, which we may use in emergency. One of these is quite close to the village (M—E), and you can picture us building these pits, which are really low mounds, turfed over and painted, so as to be invisible from an Aeroplane, something like this,



On our right a youthful Frenchman is ploughing with three white horses, shouting unintelligibly at them. Behind us runs the road, along which a steady trickle of British soldiers runs all day, and in greater strength at night. On our left are two old Ladies, four children, two dogs, and a perambulator, apparently engaged in digging at a cabbage patch. These subsequently wander away, when brother Bosche starts shelling (or rather trying to) the 6″ Howitzers a little further to the left. We used to see a lot of sausages (captive balloons) here, but they have evidently migrated. I counted seven one day. Except when in the trenches, where one has to sleep dressed and equipped, I always get into pyjamas at night. At present I sleep in my flea-bag, and valise, plus rug and overcoat, but Carroll and I are going to get a couple of beds made as soon as we can get some more timber. Could you send me *Hoof and Claw*, and *Neighbours Unknown*, by C. G. D. Roberts, some old time. Well, goodbye now, and tons of love to all, from

CRICK.

P.S.—I should certainly be rather glad of the boots from Leyland's as my present "gum boots" are not as waterproof as they were. Just got your letter of last Thursday, thanks AWFULLY for it.

D/84.

Wednesday, October 13th.

MY VERY BELOVED MUM

Thanks awfully for all your letters. We have held a committee Meeting *re* warm clothes for the men. We decided we would each be responsible for two things per man, and put them all into a hat and drew. As a result of this it is my bounden duty to produce, in the fulness of

time, *134* mufflers, and *50* pairs of drawers. Mufflers should be khaki, and drawers range from a 26″ to a 33″ waist (and be pretty thick). I wonder if you know of anybody who is keen on making mufflers, I should think quite a lot would be, but I don't know about drawers. We also discussed the question of Christmas Cheer for the men, and we hope to give each man the following :—

Plum Pudding . .	1/6	
Cigarettes . .	1/-	
Chocolate . .	6d.	
Soap . . .	3d.	
Tooth Brush . .	4d.	(6d. but only two-thirds of men would want one)
Razor . . .	1/-	(3s. but only one-third would want them)
Bromo . . .	2d.	
Matches . . .	3d.	
Tobacco . . .	1/-	
Pipe . . .	1/-	
	7/-	

For the purposes of uniformity and buying wholesale, we thought it would be best if the Captain's "Missus" acted as Treasurer, so she will write to you, giving you details, and if you could send the untold wealth you collect to her, it would be the best way. Now whenever you meet a patriotically inclined person, you might mention to them that if they are unable to restrain themselves from making a muffler or a pair of drawers, D/84 B.E.F. is the right shop to send them to. Also you might introduce the fact that you are always glad to receive monetary donations for

buying same, and that the paltry sum of 7s. (even in these hard times), will procure health and happiness at Christmas for a whole gunner, of the same illustrious Battery.

I have just got your letter, written last Sunday, thank you very, very much for it. I don't think I will give Carroll the card, as, to quote his own words, "I am not a very expansive person." When you come to think about it, what *could* he tell you about me? We none of us show what we feel, and only one's self can give the least idea of what one feels. I assure you honestly, that I enjoy life here a good deal more than I did at Heytesbury, Weedon, or Rugby. For the first time since I went to Naish (with the exception of holidays *of course*), I wake up feeling happy, without a care in the world. After all, what is there to be miserable about? A few shells, but one soon gets used to them. A comfortable dug-out with a beautiful and extensive view. The only thing we don't like is trenches. The feeling that if you are shelled, gassed, minen- or flammen-werfered, or attacked with the bayonet, you can't get away, is not pleasant as you have no where to go to. It is largely, if not entirely, sub-conscious, as you certainly *wouldn't* go away, in any of the above contingencies, even if you could. And then the mud, and the food, and not being able to change, Oh I could, and *do*, enjoy anything after the trenches.

I will now explain about our being in reserve. It is purely a Battery Show, and simply means that we don't fire, although we are still fired *at* (or not as the case generally is). It holds many more good points for the Officers, than it does for the men, for we don't have to be in the trenches, or at the Battery or Observing Station all day, and can wander about the countryside on our "lawful occasions." Maxse, commanding the 18th Division, is very keen on our

knowing all about our various lines of defence in the rear, and this makes a good excuse for what would otherwise be merely a "joy ride." This thickly wooded part of the country is very beautiful, and very unwarlike these Autumn days. It brings one up with quite a jerk to think that one's profession and duty is to kill and injure one's fellow man across the way, where an Autumn-tinted wood is but a lurking ground for Observation Stations, or a screen for guns. What wicked madness it seems. It is the mode of life, and the attitude of every other living creature but man, and he had at last attained to something better. Only to go back again. Let us hope, after all, that it is a preparation for better things. I have received all the Mags. and papers now, which were very much appreciated. I also got the further consignment of shirts and vests from Dad, though I have not yet received the "Force" parcel etc. Well, Il faut switcher off, maintenant, good-night, and all my love, from CHRISTIAN.

P.S.—We start being "Supporting Battery" again next Monday. My address is always

D/84, R.F.A.,
B.E.F., France.

D/84th Bde., R.F.A.,
B.E.F., France.
16.10.15, *Saturday.*

MY DEAR OLD OBSQUOTTI

Many thanks for all your letters; I am so sorry I haven't written before, but the truth is I have been too slack. I am sure that I misjudged Z. and X. What I said was really meant *in case* they had turned out as I said. It is difficult to

realise how much everybody must have changed since a year ago. And yet it seems a long time, much more than a year, when one looks back. We have been in reserve for the last fortnight, and I go down to the trenches the day after to-morrow. I usually have rotten luck, and get down there just in time for a heavy bombardment, or a mine, or something of the sort. The one thing I always hate the idea of is gas. It constitutes a favourite nightmare. I am down in the trenches looking over the parapet (I wouldn't do *that* in real life). Suddenly I see the gas coming. I feverishly snatch out my tube helmet, to discover that the eye-piece is broken. I awake. We have had very foggy weather these last days. It lifted a bit this afternoon, accompanied by loud buzzing of bored aircraft, but it has now come down as thick as ever. Excuse such a short letter, but I will write again when I have had some thrilling experiences. T.O.L. from

C. C. C.

His Mark.

D/84 R.F.A., B.E.F., France.
17.10.15,
Sunday Evening, 9.45 P.M.

MY DARLING MUM

Thanks awfully for your lettuah of the 14th. We have got that *Daily Mail* Map too. The A—— is thickly wooded, as a matter of fact, from here right down past H—Y, where we first stopped. Mostly Poplars. The Place where I stopped at the Mairie is B—— Sur A——, or B—— Sous C——. The section was on the river bank, half-way between B—— Sur A—— and V——Sur A. We have had very foggy weather recently, but they made a

pretty good shot for yours truly, yesterday, fog or no fog. I got a shell about 20 yards away, and the Captain had a narrow squeak coming down from the O.S. It must have been a mistake for it is quite against their principles to shell a harmless non-belligerent. They pride themselves a lot on always knowing who has fired, and I bet they know we are in reserve, and start work again to-morrow. They must have a wonderful spy system. We have had rather a scare lately about these white horses, which do the ploughing. Said to be a means of signalling, and they certainly shelled 2 Batteries which the white horses were in line with. All investigated and found authentic, however. Well, goodbye till Friday, as I don't suppose I shall be mentally capable of writing from the trenches, and *tons* of love, from

CRICK.

D/84th Bde., R.F.A.,
B.E.F.
October 22nd, Friday.

MY VERY, VERY DARLING MUM

Thank you awfully for all your letters, and for the enclosures. Of course it doesn't matter a bit about those drawers being woollen, as long as they aren't too "gossamery." We take what we can get and are thankful. Well, me voici back at the Battery again after my four days in the trenches, it feels quite like coming home! I had quite a quiet time down there, except that the huns blew up a colossal mine in front of the poor old Tambour, bashing it about a lot, and killing 10 people and disabling a lot more by gas poisoning (Carbon Monoxide). It is thought that it went off by mistake. We fired a Camouflet at 4.30 A.M., and at 6.35 this enormous great thing went off, either ignited by burning gas, or

some wretched Landworm over the other side thought the "leads" would be sure to be cut, and pulled one to see. Otherwise "nothing to report." I am (provisionally) so glad Hump has got measles, and I do hope they don't make him feel too rotten. Pretty mouldy for Naish as you say. There is a full moon to-night, and everything is as light as day, a bad night for patrols in the trenches. You appear to have been having the same filthy fogs as we have had. As a matter of fact a fog in the trenches is rather fun, as you can walk about the ground between your own fire and communication trenches, and I even ventured forth in front of our barbed wire. Funny to think that one is within 30 seconds of the German Trench. Thank you most awfully for the books (*Hoof and Claw* etc.) and the parcel from Stores, the one with the W. Pett Ridge Book in. *Daddy Long Legs* is one of the most charming books I have ever read; it is so much better than *Freckles*, that I couldn't read the latter. I am at present enjoying *Prophets, Priests, and Kings*. I must say I thoroughly endorse the sentiments of that fellow who wrote that poem about "Why should we have a daily wail?" in this week's *Punch*, don't you? With apologies to Aunt Dora, it (id est the "wail") seems to me to be poisonous from start to finish. But then I never read it. I thought A. C. Gardiner hit several nails on the head rather neatly, though this may simply be because he expresses one's own opinion, with, as you say, a true journalist's glibness. Anybody who is anti-Northcliffe, can always command a lenient hearing from me. (Hark to the lad, forsooth) and now, me mathre, buenos nojes (so pronounced at all events) and lots of love from

CHRISTIAN.

D/84th Bde., R.F.A.,
B.E.F., France.
Saturday, October 23rd, 1915.

My dear old Humpoid

I was rejoiced to hear that you had got measles. I hope they deal kindly with you. Just the right time of term to get them too, just imagine, if you had got 'em in the hols. or when you were taking an exam. or something. I should devote next term to Mumps, take a rest for the Summer term, and have a go at scarlatina this time next year. I am just back at the Battery after 4 days doing Forward Observing Officer in the trenches, where I had quite a quiet time, except for an accidental German mine which shook the place like an earthquake. We are more or less settling down for the Winter here, and making our dug-outs comfortable. Our mess dug-out is really very fine. It has steps and a beautiful red brick path leading down to it, and an alcove. It is all wood inside, with a high-class sliding window, old oak table, and plush sofa (looted from Fr—t Ry. Station). In fact *some* dug-out. Well, au revoir, and a quick recovery.

Christian.

D/84th Bde., R.F.A.,
B.E.F.
23.10.15, 7.15 P.M.

My dear Bro.

(As the men always start their fraternal letters), many thanks for your lettuahs. Rather mouldy for Naish, getting Measles on the tapis, but about the best time Hump could have chosen, if he *must* have them. Oh! by the way do you happen to have 134 mufflers, or 50 pairs of drawers on

you? No? Well, ask your friends will you, because I am collecting them. Oh no not entirely for myself, for the men don't you know. I have started a great anti-rat campaign. Ver' cunning. First of all I put down oatmeal outside the hole of each rat. This to allay suspicion. The next night the oatmeal is put down well mixed with the famous "raticide." "This is really a dried virus, harmless to cats, dogs, men, etc., but breeding a deadly disease in rats and mice; this virus——" but of course you know all that. This is how it works. Let us suppose only one rodent (*i.e.* rat) partakes. Between eight and fourteen days later the patient leaves his happy home under my bed and dies in the open (one of the properties of raticide), in agony. He is then devoured by a party of his particular pals, and some mice, say five pals and twenty mice, which all are infected. Next 75% of the mice will be eaten by rats, which are thus infected, so that by the Integral Calculus, 3011.3 rats will be suffering in three months time, which is very pleasing, in fact "To-day's beautiful thought." There is practically nowt of interest doing here, as you have doubtless already gathered.

T.O.L. from

C. C. C.

D/84th Bde., R.F.A.,
B.E.F., France.
25.10.15, 5.30 P.M.

MY BELOVED MUM

Thank you so very much for your letters. There is a beastly Easterly gale blowing, bringing rain and mist with it. As unpleasant a day as you could wish to meet, and which

will carry away the last reminders of Summer. Leave has started under the following arrangements. Every 5th day the Bde. sends away an Officer and 3 men on leave. First of all each Battery (4), Headquarters, and Amm. Col., send in one officer and 2 men, and these are worked through first. Then the Batteries etc., send in again, and the list is worked through again. Not a bad scheme, but it is impossible to predict when you will get leave, or to let anybody know in time, if you do get it. Thanks awfully for your letter from Weatherbury Fireside. I am hesitating whether to call my dug-out Weatherbury, or something comic. *Re* drawers. It would be best if you send them out *more or less* as you collect them. We shouldn't issue them all at once, but as they were wanted, so that except for cost of postage this would obviously be the best way. I am much enjoying *Prophets, priests and kings.* I hope Mott will read it, I shouldn't wonder if they introduce it as a text book. This is one of the poorest letters I have ever written, but I always feel intellectually flattened out after censoring letters.

Very Much Love from

CHRISTIAN.

D/84.
28.10.15.

MY VERY DARLING MUM

Thanks awfully for yours of the 25th. I have been contemplating Cording Boots for some time, and I find now that the issue of Gum boots has been stopped. Which being the case I had better have a pair, size 10. Not much doing here, though we have had some quite interesting shooting these last few days. The Captain and

I walked over "B" Batteries O.S. to-day, and did some registering. It is still a very pretty place, a chateau in a wood. The state of the chateau now gives one the impression that the family is not in residence. No roof or front and so on, but nothing can spoil the Autumn tints of the wooded valleys round about. This is a very scrappy line, but I am longing to get at three Mags. which have just arrived. Well, goodnight now, my darling Mum, and I can tell you that all the love that reaches me out here is very deeply appreciated.

Very much love from

CHRISTIAN.

D/84.
28.10.15.

MY DEAR DAD

Many thanks for your letter of the 23rd. This is one beastly day. A howling, wailing Sou'Wester with rain to match. The roof of my dug-out has started leaking, and salvage operations, with corrugated iron, are at present under way. I shall be extremely glad of the Lotus boots. I want to use one pair of boots exclusively for the waders, which, of course don't save your boots as they do your feet.

We have been doing a good deal of shooting these last few days, after our long period of economical quiescence. I expect Fritz wonders what has happened. A prisoner taken the day before yesterday, said that 17 men had been killed by artillery fire in our Sector. A good mark for us, what? My one consolation for this dirty weather, is that some rheumaticky old Landwurm over the way is probably enjoying it even less than I am. I love to think of that

rheumy Teuton, manning the firestep at "Stand to," in the cold and wet.

Well, I am afraid there is very little to write about, so I will "cease firing."

Much love from

CHRISTIAN.

D/84.

30.10.15, 4.20 P.M.

MY VERY BELOVED MUM

Thank you fearfully for yours of the 27th. It is very good of everybody to take such an interest in Mufflers etc. Things are jogging along much as usual here. Griffin is in the trenches, and Carroll is down at the wagon line most of the day. I usually spend the morning in the Observing Station, and the Captain the afternoon. At present an Aeroplane is buzzing overhead, punctuated by peevish expostulations from the German "Archibald's" shells, which miss our planes "not once but 20 times a minute." When one is in the Observing Station, one sits with a telescope and surveys one's "sector" of the landscape. Fortunately we have got a pretty extensive view, with plenty of woods and villages, so that you can never be bored. Here are my notes of this morning's happenings.

10.15. Enemy Captive balloon up. Magnetic 29°.

10.40. Very large column of black smoke over horizon, Magnetic 44°. (It must have been an engine getting up steam.)

11.0. A train, engine and 6 trucks carrying long planks, travelling fast, southwards along C—E to F—T Ry. (If you were a thousand yards nearer, I'd stop your little games my lad.)

11.5. Balloons up. Magnetic 29°, 38°.
11.15. Engine returned without trucks.
11.20. 1 Howitzer shell on Coy. H.Q. behind Tambour.
11.21. No. 2 Action. Target 22. Corrector 164.
3050 Fire, 1 round.
Cor. 166 Repeat 1 round.
("Vengeance is mine.")

Some more Balloon, a cart or two, and so forth.

It is a wonderfully interesting riddle, I wonder if we shall ever get a chance to find out for ourselves. The landscape looks absolutely deserted, though it must be alive with men, unseen to us. If only we could find the brains of the beast, his observing stations. We have had great fun to-day with a Hun, sent out to mend telephone wires. I was watching him this morning when we put a 6″ Howitzer shell about 50 yards from him. He did the quarter mile in even time. The Captain sniped him again this afternoon. Of course with our guns the shell arrives before he hears anything, and he got a nasty jar. Thank you awfully for the photos. Lord, what memories. Those little ones of Hugh's are wonderfully good. It is a comforting thought that everything in them is still more or less unchanged. Well, good-night and tons of love from

CRICK.

P.S.—We have now a goodly stock of force in hand, but I have used up all my writing paper. I will let you know when I may expect a leave, when Griffin comes out of the Trenches and we have had a confab.

D/84.
31.10.15.

My dear old Hump

How goes it with the measles the noo? Maurice and I had 'em in the spring term, when you were flattened out at Naish, and Dad, Ada, and Francis were down with you, and Mum was in Egypt. Lord, I did feel mouldy to begin with, but when Maurice was put in the same room things bucked up a bit. We had the most weird nurses though. One of them had just come back from America, and insisted on trying to talk American. It was enough to lay you out at any time, much less when you had measles. Not much doing here. We have got the wily hun pretty well in hand round these parts. We don't mind him doing a little trench mortaring, or an occasional difference of opinion with the Batteries, but beyond that, No. I am always much amused at the hun behind his lines, he is so frightfully human. In one place in particular we can see things on a road and a railway. They must be a good 5 miles away, but you can see things distinctly through a telescope. Trains are particularly interesting, but they are rather rare. In clear weather we usually have a whole flock of German sausage balloons up. The huns have just sent over 6 little lumps of hate. Harmless as usual, what should we do without little Fritz, to remind us we are at war. We have been hearing all sorts of wild rumours about going to Salonika, but I don't think for a moment that it is true. I hope so, or else goodbye all chances of leave. The Brigade send an officer away every 5 days, the Captain goes on Wednesday, and I hope to "Wangle" it so that I get one by the Christmas Hols. It is a filthy day here to-day. Our worst wind, a Sou'wester, bringing

with it the spices of the South *i.e.* icy rain. Well, I will dry up for the present. T.O.L. from

CRICK.

D/84.
4.11.15.

MY VERY DARLING MUM

Thanks awfully for your letters. I have just received the one written on the 1st. We have had the usual batch of totally unreliable rumours about moving to Salonika. I am afraid poor old Servia's number is up, for the present at any rate, though she will probably take a lot more squashing than Belgium did. I believe the Germans have chucked up all idea of pushing on this front, at any rate here. Which being the case one feels rather like Scrap, in his famous combats with a rope. He didn't mind wasting his energies while he had a definite object in view. When you tied the rope to the garden seat, he lost interest and chucked it. We can't chuck it. I do hope we see some open fighting though. This is Thursday and we have been in reserve since Monday. Griffin is up here and Carroll is at the wagon line, while the Captain is on leave.

I went for a ride this afternoon on my patrician old Black Mare, who has a very noble dislike for work. All the same she's an old dear. I rode through A—t, and along the straight road to the place we detrained from, striking off to the left across country to B—— sur A——, through V—— sur A——, and so home to M—E. The country is looking lovely, with all the autumn colours, and one smells all the familiar autumn smells. Not much doing here, as per usual. I hope the Humpo is better. I

consider Mott did JOLLY WELL to be above his C.O. place in the lower bench. Tons of love from

CHRISTIAN.

P.S.—A camouflet is a young mine, usually used to blow in an enemy mine.

D/84.
Sunday, 7.11.15.

MY DEAR OLD ERBERT

'Ow yer goin on, aie? Ho Raht? We have just finished our first week as reinforcing Battery. The Captain went on leave last Wednesday, and should be back next Thursday. Meantime Griffin is up here, who doesn't think I do any work. Carroll and I cross-examined him to-day, as to what he EXPECTED me to do, on which score he was very properly silent. Besides as I always point out to him, if I got up earlier in the morning than he does (8.30) it would be a breach of military discipline as inferring criminal procrastination on the part of my superior Officer. I had plenty of work between the ages of 7 and 17 and now I think I am entitled to a rest, Pensez vous ne pas? Carroll and I rode over to "The Girl in the Taxi," to-day, to revisit our old haunts. It has been a most glorious day, and the Somme is one of the most beautiful rivers I have ever seen. At the G.i.t.t. it breaks through the chalk downs, we are at present in action on, in a very broad flat valley, with steep sides, about 5 miles wide, and heavily wooded, and reed grown. It gives a very curious sensation, for as you ride over the flat moor, it looks like going on for ever. Suddenly you go through a belt of trees, and find yourself on the brink of the valley.

The Somme winds away into the mist, blue water, brown rushes, and Autumn woods, and the hills on either bank, and to the left, the spires of the G.I.T.T. among the trees. My pony, Bert, was unimpressed. He has been in for some time with cracked heels, and nearly pulled the arms out of me, and he proceeded to demonstrate that he only reached the top of his form on a 45° slope. I hope to get a leave some time about the New Year. By the way thanks awfully for your letter. T.O.L. from

CHRISTIAN.

Same old Place.
9.11.15.

MY DEAR DAD

Thanks awfully for all your letters. I am so sorry I have been such a rotten correspondent lately.

The 20 scarves arrived quite safely to-night, and very glad of them the men will be too. I have at last received a receipt from the man Harrod. The cause of all the trouble is that they addressed to D/184th Bde., R.F.A., and the poor old receipt has been more or less wandering round Europe to judge by the envelope. They must have done the same thing to the Gramophone which was sent off at the same time, and Lord knows where that is, probably in Germany. Well, well, our business methods; I suppose one ought not to grumble in war time. The news from the near East is pretty bad to-night isn't it? I wonder if K—— can do anything, I suppose if any one can, he can. It is blowing like the deuce here, a westerly Gale too, which means rain sooner or later. By the way I thought of giving £5 towards the cash fund, and how much did you or Mum say the drawers etc. would come

to? It is most awfully good of you and everybody to subscribe these hard times. We are just beginning to find out the resources of the country, one of which is the Expeditionary Force Canteen at Rail-head. Here one may purchase savoury meats (in tins) such as we love, and good cigarettes very cheap. So that it might be as well if I got 'em from there instead of from home. Much love from

CHRISTIAN.

As per usual.
9.11.15.

MY VERY BELOVED MUM

Thanks *MOST* awfully for all your top-notch letters. I have just got the one dated 6th. Some of the groups are très weird aren't they? Sad to think that those Beech trees we used to see over the end of the new piece, have passed, with Cole's Farm, and the Brougham's Pond, to the limbo of things passed but not forgotten. What a complete apache, the Tim-buck looks in the Romsley Wood photo. *Re* books I should like *Pollyooly* by Edgar Jepson. I have not yet met anybody called Petro in the regiment, although I seem to have met thousands of others (which is not much use). Talking about Nell I wonder how Rufus, of the quaint countenance is going on these days. Jupiter is wonderful these nights as you say. Carroll and I had a great ride over to the "Girl in the Taxi" last Sunday, and found her in excellent health, considering the war hits her pretty hard, and more lovely than ever. Coming off the downs on to the S—E valley, you suddenly find yourself looking right down on to our old friend, and away up the broad valley, and it is an exquisite picture. When you get down near the château the road runs quite close to the edge

of the marsh, which is really a lake, and it always reminds me of that picture[1] at home of a lake with some rushes beyond it. The coloured original (?) is in the dining room at Barmere, over the sideboard isn't it? Tons of love from

CRICK.

Same old Spot.
12.11.15.

MY DEAR DAD

This is to thank you much for your letters, and to let you know that the drawers have safely arrived, this evening. Also, incredible though it be, *so has the long lost Gramophone.* Marvellous. I have received and dispatched the official receipt for 20 mufflers. The weather forecast in *Comic Cuts* (alias *Tit Bits*), actually the Corps Intelligence Summary, has been amply justified lately, to wit: "a Cyclonic depression is approaching from the British Isles, and very strong Westerly winds may be expected." One of these presents from home which we don't appreciate. I enclose a cheque for £5 : 13 : 4. £5 towards comforts and drawers, and 13/4 for the Batteries, for which very many thanks. They are not for my use really, but for general use. Much love from

CHRISTIAN.

12.11.15.

MY TRÈS BELOVED MUM

Thanks awfully for your letters. The Captain arrived back safely yesterday at about 6 P.M. He had the most awful journey going, no food and no sleep, and a dirty crossing; but quite a good one coming back. It has been

[1] Etching of "Chill October," by Millais.

blowing a Westerly gale now for 4 days, and we are getting a bit fed up with it, especially as it is not entirely devoid of rain. The wandering Gramophone turned up to-night, which is a great relief, besides being a pleasure. Everything very quiet still, except the elements. It is getting late, so I must turn in, goodnight, my beloved Mum, from

CHRISTIAN.

Same Rural Retreat.
16.11.15.

MY VERY, VERY, DARLING MUM

Thank you most awfully for your letters, especially the last 2 which I have just received. Dates unknown as torn up, also I have forgotten where to address to. I should say myself, Queen's Hotel, Sidmouth, S. Devon, but I won't risk it. Yes, we have had appalling weather here, and it has snowed the last 2 nights. The Wagon Line is unspeakable, although pretty strongly spoken of. The trench to the Observing Station is worse. I went along in gum boots the other day and got stuck at a corner. I finished up with both my boots off and hopelessly stuck. Telephone wires entwined round my neck, wrists, and ankles, and mud, well mud everywhere. Fortunately a little Scotch Sapper came along, and when I had explained to him what I was meant to be, he put a working party on and dug me out. At times like these, life is positively dangerous. The Gramophone is a *great* success, and we play it every available minute of the day. No unit complete without one. Well, goodnight now my beloved Mum, from

CHRISTIAN.

P.S.—I have run out of envelopes.

Same address.
17.11.15.

My dear Godmother

Thank you very much indeed for all your gifts. They are so many that once again I will not try and enumerate them all, but content myself with saying "*Some* Godmother." It is a most magical night here, frosty, and a ¾ moon, and a little snow lying. We have been much rejoiced lately by the arrival of a long expected Gramophone, which does Yeoman service every evening, and almost consoles me for being parted from the good old Weatherbury pianola, which never misses a night while yours truly is to hand. Things are really very quiet round here, mostly mine warfare and a certain amount of Artillery activity. I have an uncomfortable suspicion that we have got some mouldy old Landwurm, and Jaegar Battalions opposite us. If *that's* the sort of thing we are going to be up against all Winter, I would almost rather go to Salonika, though I am sure I should bitterly regret it once I got there. The principal enemy here (and most wheres for the matter of that) is mud. Our Wagon line, where all the horses (120) and drivers, wagons, carts etc. are, is at a big mill, the Moulin du Vivier, and is between 2 streams, so you can imagine what it is like. We have got good stables up at last, but roads are slowly swallowed up, as fast as we lay 'em down. Life must be rather alarming in Fairhazel Gardens these "Zeppy" times, it is much safer out here with a nice bomb proof dug-out to sleep in. I wish the rats didn't appreciate it quite so much though. I hope to get 8 days' leave somewhere in the Xmas hols, if we haven't been pushed off to the uttermost ends of the earth by that time, and I expect I shall pay you a flying visit, probably drop in for breakfast, or something

awkward like that, so you will know what to expect. Well, Am Tag, and so very many thanks Louie for all your kindness, from CHRISTIAN.

"Same salubrious Spot,
same dark and dirty dug-out."
(Keats.)

18.11.15.

MY SWEET MOTTY

We are having the very jolliest time here, we have had some ripping snow, and now we have got the cutest little fog you ever saw, and didn't see through. Thanks mucho for your letters. I hope you made a success of the lesson, and contributed, be it never so tiny a drop, to the great sea of human happiness.

"Each evil reader
a constant feeder
with innocent merriment"
Mikado (adapted)

"and the weaves bate into the ship." Things seem to be going badly in the East, what say lad? If William isn't *very* careful, D/84 may spend a lively winter yet. It seems to me this front is getting a bit of a back number; all the best people are going East for the winter this year.

We are rather hurt because Fritz hasn't shelled us for nearly a fortnight. I know he is rather short of ammunition, but considering we came all the way from England I think he might take a little interest in us! What I mean is, is it manners? pah! it's hunnish. Carroll and I are now the proud owners of a top-hole gramophone and a fine selection

of records. Any additions to which will be very welcome as suitable gistmas Chrifts to your boy at the front, only don't send any out (I don't *expect* it, mind you), without telling me what they are, for fear of duplicates. You might circulate this intelligence, thank you sir, thank you *very* much. Well, old top, if I don't get a leave in the Xmas Hols, it won't be my fault, you bet your bottom, blooming dollar on *that*. Well, am tag, Yrs.,

'ERBERT.

Same old Hole.
19.11.15.

MY VERY DEAR MUM

Thanks *most* awfully for the scarf, *some* muffler. And for your letters from Sidmouth, *some* Sidmouth. Weather here has improved slightly, though we have had ghastly fogs these last days. A new Attaché arrived unexpectedly to-night, a little bird from the 38th division (the Welsh lot). He seems to be a quaint little creature though one better on the ——, for he does seem to want to learn something. A fellow called L, in my term, whom we all thought a complete wash-out, is his adjutant, if you please. Great Scotland Yard alive-O! You will have gathered from the opening chorus that the 14 Mufflers arrived all right, and were promptly issued. I never thanked you for the top hole Stores parcels, especially the one with Eccles cakes etc., we had quite a spread for some time. I think I will write again to-morrow night, as I feel so stupid at the moment. Tons of love from C. C. C.

20.11.15.
9.50 P.M.

MY TRÈS BELOVED MUM

Thank you very much for your letter describing the run to Chagford.

"When Adam and Eve
Were turnèd out
From the Garden hard by Heaven
They planted another one
Down in the West
'Twas Devon, 'twas Devon
Glorious Devon."

I always have a kind of feeling that it is rather superficial though, the scenery jumps at you; our own country, Shakespeare's land of Arden, may not seem much at first, but it has the charm of being beautiful if you only know where to look. What say? It is curious, isn't it, how a type of country gives one a sort of subconscious impression of its character. This country is fickle and evil. Barren moorland, based on crumbling chalk, a sluggish river, the only timber soft treacherous poplar, mud built houses, damp air. It's bad, rotten bad. Give me our lovely Midland county, Stratford, Evesham, Romsley, Chaddesley Corbett. Nothing in the world is ever better than a man's native land, is it? Some day or another we will go to Sidmouth together. You might have a look at Dulac's Picture Book, and let me have it, if it is any good. Well, I must say goodnight now, as the Captain is preparing to retire. I wonder if I shall ever have such a good leader again, je pense que non. Would you send me one of those little red cases of Gelatine Lamels of Savory and Moore's. Very, very much Love from C. C. C.

22.11.15.

Beloved Brother

Salutation! It is now many days (and nights) since I last took unto me quill and inkhorn (albeit a pencil indelible) to indite a fraternal parchment unto thee. "Well 'ow are yer, ole top?" to revert to modern day phraseology. Feeling a bit stronger and able to take a little nourishment? That's right. I see from the Society journals (court circular) that you return to the ducal seat on December 16th of this year. I hope to be in residence there for a few days (in the intervals of continental travel) on or about the 25th of said month, also of this year. I am glad to hear you only work (or did) (?) for 3 hours a day. I remember how bad we all were after we had a go of flu at Naish. The loathsome would-be-American nurse, and her bevy of ministering angels gave us to understand we should do about ½ an hour's work per diem, and go home early. They little knew Mossy. The first day he remarked "Now then, you've all been having a slack time, while this flu has been on. We are going to work now." And work we did. I wonder where your desk is. I used to sit in the right hand corner opposite you, as you go into the room. I have got rather a passion for furnishing, and this took the form of having a brand new desk which I kept frightfully tidy, all the more difficult because I had a herd of coloured inks, wherewith to make Maps for Mossy. Both these characteristics bore fruit at Rugby. I had a perfect mania for study furnishing. It progressed from post cards of engines, and beastly little ferns in horrid little pots, to Egyptian brass and copper and original pictures, by the well-known artists, A. Carver and K. Creswell. Before

Maurice joined me I had a study with a fellow called Darby (fern and postcard days). We fought like fiends, Charles Hope of Montreal acting as a Catalytic Agent; he threw ink over the postcards and inundated the ferns with Methylated Spirit. We were pretty good friends all the same. Darby is now head of games and in the XV and XI, while yours truly is vegetating in France, what a world, what a world. It is curious that my recollection of Rugby is a sort of general one, while Naish stands out as a series of quite different sensations. Well, I don't seem to be imparting much news, so I will switch me off. T.O.L. from

C. C. C.

23.11.15.

My darling Mum

I am writing this to the strains of "Bertie the Bounder," the evening before I depart for 5 days of that infernal sewer life. It will be nearly over by the time you get this, joyful thought. At present my leave is booked for December 25th which suits me excellently, except that the trains on Boxing Day won't be too good, still as long as there is one I don't much mind. We seem to have nothing but these infernal fogs now-a-days. Venus waltz is now in swing. *Some* top note that. Now we have "Hullo Tu-Tu," this always reminds of Stella and her Grammie. I should like G. F.'s new book, sad or otherwise s'il vous plait. Well, good-night my darling Mum.

C. C. C.

2.12.15.

My dear Dad

Thanks again much for your letters. I am just back

from the old Trenches. The Hun hereabouts is a pretty harmless little creature. He fights by mining, trench-mortaring, machine-gunning, and a little field-gunning, and sniping. He has deep dug-outs, and a forest of wire. When annoyed, he waits till evening time, and then sends over about 8 colossal bombs, which blow out every candle for miles, and are INTENSELY UNPLEASANT. He got 10 months' start of us in mining, and if we had not taken over from the French, would be under our trench ere now. Our R.E. have done wonders, and he makes no headway now (touch wood). So much for the hun. We are just ourselves, and bash Fritz about with 18 pounders, 4.5 Howitzers, 6″ Howitzers, 8″ Howitzers, 4.7's, 60 pounders etc. We make a habit of looking over the parapet, and bating the opposite number. Fritz does not, not by any means. We are most certainly top dog, a great and wonderful nation, *modest* and *gentle*. We are the finest nation on earth, nothing else has any right to exist, we are bound to win the war. Wouldn't it be awful if I really had a mind like that. Much Love from

C. C. C.

29.11.15.

MY VERY DARLING MUM

Thanks most awfully for all your letters. Yes, I got *In Brief Authority*, and much enjoyed it, also *Pollyooly*. I am only up here (at the Battery) for a night, as Grant, the O.C. A/84, is on leave, and we have to carry on till Sunday. So to-morrow I am off to the trenches for another couple of days. It has been cold but dry up to to-day, and I have enjoyed it. It has poured to-day, disgusting. People have

been wonderfully good about mufflers and everything, you must let me have a list of all the people I must thank. Well, goodnight, my darling Mum, I will write again in 2 days' time. C. C. C.

WELL, OLD LAD 2.12.15.

 as the arabs say. I am so sorry you read the lesson so well. So wretchedly commonplace, not *done* I think, I *don't* think so. Do you remember that fellow Thorn, who took Simpson's place, for a fortnight, about 2 years ago. He took me in English, and you in Greek. I have, or rather we mutually discovered, that he is the machine-gun officer here, a top-hole lad. What a world! Recalls that quaint little army class-room looking on to Sheep Street. It is a long stride from there to our next meeting, when he brought in what had been his brother and we put him on my bed. However, I suppose it is war, and in a way its better side. I have been living down in the trenches for about a week, with a Company which includes P. G. Heath. He is as ever, and gave me a lot of news *re* people we knew. The elder Hebblethwaite has been killed, as doubtless you saw, so probably has Cole. The latter was a great games buck at Marlbro'. Carey is in a Border Regiment. He had met Fenwick and Eccles on a field day with Marlborough. The former much improved. Graham Heath is at Shrewsbury a great runner, and swimmer!!! I am so glad the house is going right. I wonder what sort of skipper C. G. D. makes. Rough luck on his collar bone. You would go a long day's march

before you met a sounder fellow than Greg, or Lupton, what say? I think you will probably enjoy Rugby a good deal more than I did. When you and I were there together, the house was run, and certainly monopolized by a class of lad with whom we had nothing in common. A, B, the C's, D, E, to mention a few. They all exuded a lot of "atmosphere" in their way, which contributed to the tone of the house, as we knew it, and it is that tone which gives one a lasting impression of a place. You have grown up with your own lot, and with your lot will run and monopolize the house, which is the only way to appreciate it. You've got to be of it, as well as in it, don't you think so? Well, il faut switcher, as I must write a line to Robert P. Greg. C. C. C.

2.12.15.

My darling Mum

Something has gone wrong with the infernal post, and I haven't had a mail for 3 nights, nor has anyone for that matter. However it will be all the nicer when it does come. I am still looking forward to getting this month's Magazines. *Very* many thanks for the cakes for tea, we ain't arf enjiyed 'em. I don't think you have had any news out of me since last Wednesday week, when I wrote just before going down to the trenches. I just scrawled a line last Monday, in the interval. Well, I had a pretty good time down there, everything was frozen hard, trenches cold, but *dry* and clean. I had some very sporting shoots etc., at Machine Gun Emplacements, and a farm. Came out on Monday and was relieved by Dexter of A/84. It thawed, and rained hard all day. 6 p.m. The adjutant

recollected that we had to go on as Supporting Battery till Sunday, as Grant was away. Well, these official minds, you know. So on Tuesday we all changed over again, and I struggled back, expending about a thousand foot-tons of wasted energy. I hope I shall never see such a horrid transformation again. 4 days' frost, 1 day's thaw and rain, and you have —— a nightmare, no less. Awful. The R.E. blew off a most sporting mine, huge fountain of earth, and colossal flame, it quite bucked us up. The East Surreys (8th S. Bn.) and Queen's relieve each other. The Queen's feed very well. The E. Surreys horribly. I always strike E. Surreys. I was living with P. G. Heath's company this time. Philip is still the large Heath we used to know, with the same humour. He soon realized who I was, and you can imagine we had many lies to swap. Well, enough, enough, from C. C. C.

I am nearly out of writing paper again.

Still in the same place.
3.12.15.

Dear Mr. Bonhote

I remember there were a lot of questions you asked me, but I have completely forgotten what they were. Winter has settled down upon us, and life flows along pretty uneventfully. I do about a week per month in the trenches, and spend the rest of the time at the Battery. We are pretty comfortable, and life is not too bad at all. As a matter of fact I think I am extremely lucky. Lots of congenial company, an open air life, a fairly clear conscience, enough excitement to make things worth while. Et vous, mon ami? It must be pretty lonely

work a long way from home, and not very many of one's own sort I should think. I know I should have a horrible sort of feeling that I had left home, and not been missed. That one's place had been quickly filled and the tide of forgetfulness had closed over one. Fortunately there are some people whose places cannot be filled, and one does not appreciate them properly till one has lost them. Do you remember about 2 years ago when our little Simpson was ill, and they got an undergraduate called Thorn to take his place for a fortnight? He took me in English (William Morris, précis, etc.) and Carver mi in Greek, and he had diggings in the same house in Bilton Road as you had. Our next meeting was somewhat curious. He and his brother both went to the 8th East Surreys when the war broke out, and our Battery supports them, and we live with them when down in the trenches. Cornelius Thorn is Machine Gun officer (that's the one we know) and his younger brother was a platoon Commander. One night when I was down there young Thorn went out on patrol, taking one man with him. They met a large German patrol, and young Thorn was shot through both lungs, at close range, with a revolver. He must have been killed almost at once, but we didn't know this, and tried for 4 hours to get him in, but couldn't find him. To make things more pleasant the gentle hun turned a couple of machine guns on. They had to give it up and told our Thorn what had happened. He came down at once with his servant, went out, and by some extraordinary chance, walked right into a shell hole under the German wire where young Thorn had fallen and brought him in. He got the Military Cross, and his servant the D.C.M. He remembered you well, and spoke of you in a manner to

make you blush. Carver mi is now a flourishing VIth and has just survived reading the lesson. Ever yours,

C. C. CARVER.

5.12.15.
11.15 A.M. *Sunday.*

MY DEAR ADA

Thank you *very* much indeed for sending off the Mufflers, and for all the trouble you've taken. I must say people have been most awfully good haven't they? I think the men are pretty well fitted out now; we have given 'em mufflers, drawers, vests, socks, wristlets, mittens, gloves. We have got a new K's army division attached to us for instruction. They are just out from Codford and Heytesbury like we were. In time they will take over this bit of line, and the question of the moment is "What will become of us?" Some say we are going to Ypres, or Serbia (if any). I think myself that the whole division will go into reserve for a time, and then anything might happen. It depends what is on at the moment. I don't much care what happens as long as I get away on the 25th! Much love from

CHRISTIAN.

5.12.15.

MY DEAR DAD

Thanks very much for your letter. Send out the lamels which you think best. I certainly shan't partake unless absolutely necessary, as I loathe medicine of all sorts. But it is as well to have some thing in *case* of need,

as our Brigade doctor is usually unattainable. Much love from CHRISTIAN.

5.12.15.
Sunday.

MY VERY DARLING MUM

Thanks awfully for your letters. I have now had all the Christmas numbers and we are much appreciating them. Also Dulac's picture book, it is topping isn't it? In half an hour's time we commence our 3 weeks' reserve. I think I told you Griffin goes on leave on the 10th, and so I shall be in charge at the Wagon line for 8 days or so. It should be rather a nice change. I have only once slept out of the firing line since the end of August. I suppose very few people could say that before this old war? The wind is Westerly and we are having damp, but warm weather. Could you send me some tooth paste, je n'en ai pas. *Very very* much love from

CHRISTIAN.

5.12.15.
Sabbath Morn.

BELOVED 'OOMP

I am so sorry that in the roar and stress of battle I completely forgot about your jolly old birthday. However, better late than never, and the two objects enclosed entitle you to about 8/-, avec lequel, mon ami, purchasez ce que vous voulez (Eng. "get you what you will"). I have just had about a week in the trenches, and a pretty slack time on the whole. We go into reserve at noon to-day, and remain there for 3 weeks, at the end of which time, I hope we shall meet. Nothing very exciting going on here,

except that I nearly got slain going up to the Observing Station the day before yesterday. The huns shell our trenches and then switch on to the Battery in the hopes of catching somebody.

Well Am tag, C. C. CARVER.

P.S.—I see in Brigade Orders that the rate of exchange for Francs 5 is 3/7d.

At the Mill,
10.12.15.

MY DEAR DAD

I am now leading a strenuous, though un-warlike existence at the Wagon line. The mud is appalling but we are getting it in hand. Whenever I see the sea of mud and our ramshackle erections, I take comfort from the thought that there *are* dry roads, and good solid brick houses in the world. It is very comforting. Thanks awfully for sending off lamels, and Chocolates etc. I hope to get home about 27th of this month, though it is rather uncertain. Much love from

CHRISTIAN.

Lettres de mon Moulin (du Vivier).
No. 1, Vol. 1.
10.12.15.

MY VERY BELOVED MUM

Thanks most awfully for your letters, I have just received that dated the 7th. Well, me voici au moulin du vivier, in charge of the Wagon Line, a glorious company of 100 souls, and 130 horse. It is rather a nice change being here; our billet is in peace time the sumptuous apartment

of the caretaker of the grain store, simple, but it has a wonderful bed, with real *sheets*, the first I shall have slept in since we met at Burnham! In peace time, this is *the* place in M—E. The Mayor's house and the big mill, stables, Store houses etc., a good solid, red-brick pile, splendidly built. The big grain flats make ideal billets for the troop. The wagon line itself is progressing slowly but surely. Unlike the Infantry we do everything ourselves, without R.E. help, except of course in material. We are fearfully short-handed, we are frightfully overworked, and we don't get enough material but we rub along somehow. At the present moment we are engaged in

(1) Finishing a stable.

(2) Making a road.

(3) Finishing the dining hall (our greatest achievement yet. Cement floor, corrugated iron sides and roof, proper windows, made by the wheeler, and calico instead of glass: 2 stoves, complete with chimneys, lamps, tables and forms).

(4) Completing, or rather enlarging Quartermaster's stores.

We get 3 G.S. Wagon loads of bricks per day from the ruined part of A—t, round the church. We keep the horses clean, in spite of the ubiquitous mud, and we keep our harness clean (sometimes), and yet people think a driver has a slack time on service. Griffin went off on leave to-day in the Miller's little motor. He is a bit fed up with the wagon line and has put in for Anti-aircraft. I have tried to dissuade him, and I think he is already repenting. I shall be awfully sorry if he does go, for I am very fond of old Griffin. Besides, this job just suits him really, for he was manager of a copper mine in Chile, before the war. Leave has shifted along a day and I get mine on the 26th,

if I am lucky. Unfortunately they have cut the leaves down a lot, and there is a possibility of only one, instead of 2 officers going at a time, which would shove me back a week or so. Let's hope not, anyhow it has not happened yet. I have just got the *Cornhill*, and the cakes, thanks *awfully* for them. Tons of love from

C. C. C.

P.S.—Last Sunday Gnr. Coton, a fellow-citizen, was given his Croix de Guerre. It was given him by the Army Commander (Allenby, who had the cavalry), two bands playing, a great do.

Au Moulin.
12.12.15.

My beloved Mum

Thank you most awfully for your letter, and the "Snaps." If we had only known that Dec. '15 would see yours truly where he is, how many more we should have taken, n'est-ce pas? That one of H and F made me positively shriek; Hump with his "and-will-there-be-any-more-corpses-to-day?" expression. Well, life is rolling along pretty smoothly here. To-day is Sunday, and the most Sunday-like for many months, for we had a church parade, though unfortunately I couldn't get away. The Quartermaster-Sergeant, who has it from the A.S.C., who have it from G.H.Q., tells me that the Division will shortly be going to C—y for a few days, and thence to Serbia, quien sabe, but je ne pense pas, moi. Pulling down a disused cook-house this morning, we had the most glorious rat strafe, we must have slain at least 25; one

crowded hour killing the wily rodent, is worth an eternity of fighting Germans. By Jove! how dear old Luke (C. Leslie) Smith would have enjoyed himself, "Whoie! G'wan darrn! I missed 'un." Whack! bing "I got 'un, Kioch! ain't 'ee o' whopurr, darrn!" and so on. Good old Smith, he lived for Sport, and his beloved Sussex.

Well I have lots of letters to censor, and have an appointment with the lark at the witching hour of 6.30 A.M. to-morrow. So tons of love from

CRICK.

P.S.—Thanks so much for cakes and "For this I bare him," and "Derelicts."

Au Moulin du Vivier.
14.12.15.

MY BELOVED MUM

Quant aux journaux, if fortune favours us on the 26th, I would rather they were not stopped, as of course we all read them, and then they are passed on to the men. It would seem rather selfish to stop them wouldn't it. Besides, leave is an uncertain quantity, which does not justify such business-like method I am afraid. We have got a lad from the D.A.C. (Divisional Amm. Col.) attached to us, called Kitchener, "No, not the Field-Marshal," as Carroll said, who was down to tea this afternoon. You interest me much about Joan Collis; how very unfortunate for her she is not 10 years older, when she might have had the acquaintance of the Lordswoodites. She seems to be the "simple child of nature," and is nice to those who are nice to her. It is a funny thing that one seems to know

very little about people and places one has known all one's life. I suppose we take them for granted. I mean to say I really know absolutely nothing about Mark, except that the one thing you can expect is his unexpectedness, nothing about Wog, or Hester P, or Joan Kenrick, even Tim, surely the most open of books. Similarly anything beyond the rifle range is a strange land of adventure, as is anything in the direction of the "Brūrry" (one can't render the pronunciation in writing). I know it well enough, I could tell you where all the roads go to, and how to get anywhere, but nevertheless that is the impression I've got. Whereas when you say "Woolwich" I get a sort of impression of a bird's eye map of the whole place and surrounding country. Pretty chilly these days isn't it? Tons of love from CRICK.

Au Moulin du Vivier
(Botey le Duc).
17.12.15.

MY BELOVED MUM

Thanks most awfully for yours of the 13th and 14th. This will be a very poor letter as I have a harmless but stultifying cold. The Colonel was round the Wagon line this afternoon; colonels always reduce me to a condition of stuttering impotency. However, he found things very satisfactory. He is not like your gilded Staff Bird, when he sets out to inspect a place, he sees everything to the minutest details. This will appear from the notes I took, to wit "Issue of rum checked—hay-nets—salt for horses—ammunition supply—hanging up meat in cookhouse—airing of blankets—not using lid of dixie in which tea is

made, to fry bacon for breakfast." I think the last item shows a good deal of research! I went off to tea with the Headquarter Staff (the Colonel, the Adjutant, Orderly Officer, Vet, and Doctor). The Colonel does not think we will move. Rather a surprise John French going home, I should think he has had about enough of it. Douglas Haig inspected us at the "shop." Well, good-night, and tons of love from CRICK.

P.S.—A very happy Christmas to you all, in case this arrives on that seasonable date.

Au Moulin.
20.12.15.

MY DARLING MUM

Thanks most awfully for your last 3 letters, the most recent of which (17th) I have just received. I thought you didn't sound very cheerful in the one before. "We are really quite chirpy and jolly," you say. It rather gives the impression of an unusual state of affairs, et pourquoi ça ma cherie? I suppose the news lately has been enough to depress anyone, and one is apt to read the worst into things when one is far away at home. Out here, if one doesn't look on the bright side exactly, at any rate one treats both very good and very bad with the same scepticism. Griffin has just returned, remarkably travel-worn, and very fed up with the 18th division, he wants to get out, as he says no one ever gets on in it. Well, here we are at the 20th and my leave still holds good for the 26th, may it remain so. I don't feel in the mood for writing to-night. So good-bye, my beloved Mum, from

CHRISTIAN.

Au Moulin.
22.12.15.

My darling Mum

I hope to arrive before this does. I will wire from S'hampton on arrival. Things are very quiet here, and it is a wet day. Tons of love to M, H, and F, from

Christian.

Au Moulin.
22.12.15.

My dear Dad,

This is to let you know that if all goes well I shall be with you for tea next Monday 27th, leaving here 9 A.M. on Sunday. I am just off to the Battery to play some new records Griffin brought back. A wet day here, though warm. I expect Maurice arrived home for breakfast this morning. Much love from

Christian.

First Leave

Xmas 1915.—Christian arrived home on his first leave December the 27th, 1915. We had all been eagerly on the lookout for him on the 26th,[1] laying wagers at lunch time as to what point his taxi would have reached. "Kingscote Road," said Maurice.

"Five Ways," said Humphrey, and so on. We had none of us cared to leave the house, in case he should arrive in our absence. If necessary business took one out, one tore home breathlessly, expecting to find him there on one's return.

[1] His letter about date of arrival on 27th not reaching us till later.

We all felt as the Chinese feel when they are expecting a Durria pear to fall.

Ada and I went to bed at last at 12.30 on the 26th, quite worn out with watching for him. On the 27th he arrived in the afternoon, looking very well, keen to enjoy every minute. The three brothers followed him about wherever he went. Naturally the first thing he did was to have a hot bath ; they all crowded into the bath-room, and mingled sounds of talking and splashing came from the not too spacious place. The holidays seemed really to have begun now he was at home. The motor-byke was soon out. They all four went off as soon as possible to see the Napier-Claverings and the Arch. Kenricks, Mrs. Arch. Kenrick remarking how wonderful it was, seeing all he had done, that he should fit in so naturally again into his usual place at a Nursery tea at Harborne House. Next morning they were all off to the Golf links. I had to go to the village to do some shopping for food, etc. I got through this with the utmost speed, in order to follow them to the Links and feast my eyes on seeing the four together again. There was a familiar sound about their remarks to each other—remarks not devoid of very frank brotherly criticism as to each other's play. Christian was in his brown suit.

C. C. C. would tear into town on his motor-byke ; he would return in what seemed a few minutes, and show us with delight a parcel of gay socks and ties he had bought himself. Maurice was very often taken along behind him. Crick seemed more anxious to seat him on that carrier than Mott himself was to occupy the luxurious position. There were the usual teas at the Napier-Claverings, the Arch. Kenricks and here, with a series of the old-time charades. For over eleven years charades had been the order of the day

whenever the Napier-C.s and our boys had had tea together. Mark was still at school and home for these holidays and Tim was here too. The Nursery teas at the Arch. Kenricks' were a great enjoyment. That year Wynne Kenrick had imported back from school a ripple of psychic thought—automic writing ; they would collect about a small round table in front of the fire and start their inquiries. I didn't like their doing it. I shrank from probing into the future, even in fun. I dreaded their asking some question the answer to which might have an ill-omened sound. "Shall I get married?" Christian asked. "No," was the reply. (I hated this.) "Shall I have a rough crossing back to France?" "Yes," said the oracle. (He had a smooth one. I can remember how this comforted me, absurd as it may seem.) The pianola was going nearly the whole time he was at home ; he would sit at it, leaning rather far back, very often smoking a cigarette, and treadle away at Gilbert and Sullivan's and many other favourites. They all four went to the Pantomime with their Father as they always had done : an early lunch, then a great scramble to get off in time. The Picture House wasn't forgotten either. The mornings were mostly spent at the Napier-Claverings', playing "Robbers and Travellers" in that delightful garden, and "Beckon." Sometimes they all went off and played hockey in the Chad Valley field with the Napier-Claverings, the Kenricks, Hester Pinsent, the Potts, and the Walkers.

8.30 P.M. Mon Repos (?).
4.1.16.

MY DARLING MUM

Well, well, here we are again (as it were). Griffin is on a 12 days' course at the School of Gunnery. Carroll, the Captain, and I are now in the dugout, and Kitchener is in the trenches. Carroll relieves him to-morrow. Things have been pretty lively here while I have been away. The principal event is a very *triste* one I am afraid. Some of the men were taking a German whizz-bang shell to pieces in a dugout, when the fuze, which must have been some kind of High Explosive, went off. Well, one of my best men, a bombardier, died like the very gallant Englishman, and good fellow, that he was. 2 or 3 others were slightly hurt. There has been a lot of Artillery activity in this part of the globe, and old Boche has introduced us to some coal-boxes, and lachrymatory shells. The bark of the former is worse than their bite, and the effect of the latter is to cause a purely temporary inconvenience, alors restez tranquille. I had a much better journey this time. I arrived in town to the second, and wandered across very comfortably per bus and tube, purchasing a hat and stick en route. I picked up Parker at Waterloo, and travelled down with him. We got a tea basket at Basingstoke. Sim joined us on the ship, a most luxurious packet, one of the Great Eastern steamers from Harwich to the Hook. I felt as fit as a fiddle, *SOME* fiddle too. The railway journey this side wasn't too bad, and here I am arrived safe and all standing. I shall probably be in the old trenches from Saturday next to about Wednesday. Carroll goes on leave next Tuesday. Sim has it direct from Kitchener's Secretary (George Arthur) that the war will be over this Spring.

In Spring " *THIS* young man's fancy turns to peace." Well, I hope so. Goodnight, my darling Mum, from

CHRISTIAN.

Sans Souci.
6.1.16.

MY DEAR DAD

Here we are again. I am glad to say that life, which has been dormant here for many months, is at last stirring and getting a shade more interesting. I am beginning to realize that we are still a battery and not a crustacean or a vegetable. To-morrow night we hope to push a few Boches in the eye, blowed if we don't. Much love from CHRISTIAN.

El Dorado.
7.1.16.

MY DARLING MUM

So many thanks for your letters of the 4th. By Jove, I did enjoy those seven days. I am afraid you think me un peu unresponsive, n'est-ce pas? But 8 days' leave is a very necessary, as well as a very precious thing, and if one becomes sentimental, it is liable to spoil it, don't you think so? As it was I had a thoroughly good time, and enjoyed it up to the last minute. TONS of love from CRICK.

Mud Villa.
7.1.16.

DEAR AUNT (MOTTY)

This war is a ——. Not 'arf it aint neither. It's blowing like the deuce, and raining like the juice, and it's a pretty poor sort of evening altogether. There is going to

be a little "cutting out" attack with bombs by our noble 8th E. Surreys to-morrow with Artillery Co-operation. Rather good sport, but a ghastly hour, 1 A.M. I go down to the ripping old trenches to-morrow, and stay till Wednesday. It ought to be rather interesting, as they are sure to be jumpy, after to-night's stunt. They are getting into a most iniquitous habit of sending off those big trench mortars. "Who-o-o-OMPP ! !" and up we go. Also some coal-boxes (8″ Howitzers) and "weeping shell." However we have got 15″ and 12″, so we are all right, aren't we, what? Well old chipmunk, I had a top-hole time at home, absolutely no regrets. The sort of thing the memory of which carries you on for months. It is nice to think how little this war has touched the things which really matter. After all what do I care for this rotten country, and idiotic war, when I have still got a home, and family, and friends well away from it. There's one thing, I bet we are one better than the old Germans who go on leave to an atmosphere of bread tickets and Gott strafeing England. One doesn't realize how fond one is of a place and people until one is away. What did you think of old Derby's "figures." (Gee ! *SOME* figures.) We all thought them pretty rotten out here.

Well, I will now switch. Much love from

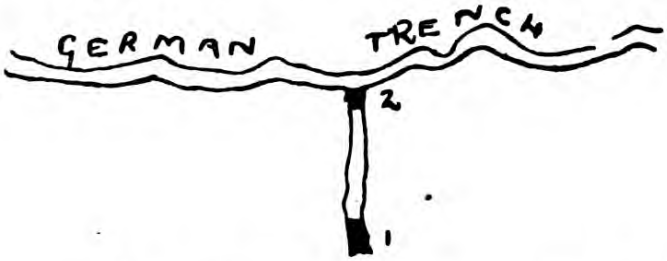
CHRISTIAN.

12.1.16.

MY VERY BELOVED MUM

Thank you so much for your 3 letters, of the 7th, 8th, and 9th, it *is* good to hear of all that goes on at home ; you feel there is somewhere where you really belong. Well, this merry morn, I joyously tootled out of the trenches.

Just before I left we had a "Strafe." Gee, *some* strafe. It was arranged that 1 A.M. we, and the 4.5 Howitzers, and A Battery, should demolish a sap, containing 2 emplacements.



We had a perfectly gorgeous shoot. Earth, beams, splinters, corrugated iron, hurtled through the air. The Boche retaliated, and with commendable zeal put about a dozen howitzer shell into his own wire. Loud applause. Then he got to work with some jolly pretty shrapnel shooting, the best I have ever seen him do. I ought to know as I was within 20 yards or so of most of it. A Lance Corporal and I made ourselves particularly minute between 2 walls of sand bags, while the Boche laid it on pretty thick for about 10 minutes. Net result nil, and I don't mind betting we gave him a pretty bad time. I am glad we made him answer back, as he has been uncannily quiet lately, and one pictured him preparing a frightful vengeance, for a brisk little night bombardment one night when I was down. Our long suit is Artillery, we can always beat him on that. The German knave, queen, king and ace, is the "sausage," or heavy trench Mortar. He bets his boots on it. The *modus operandi* is as thus:—you hear a gentle "phutt!" from the German lines. Hastily dropping all that is yours you scan the heavens, where you see what looks like a little stick or something sailing through the air. Having seen in which direction it is going, you remove yourself in the

opposite direction one time, and where that little stick falls it is as an earthquake had been, and the heavens are rent asunder. They started this little joke the first day I was down, but we saw the blighter firing, and 4 of our shrapnel, and one 4·5 Howitzer stopped *his* little mouth for him. He hasn't fired since. It is extraordinary how one gets used to things; one walks about muddy trenches all day, and at night retire to your dug-out (if you are lucky there are not more than 3 inches of mud on the floor). There you pull a couple of sandbags over your wet and muddy boots and gaiters, lay your revolver, gas-helmet, and electric torch within reach of your hand, crawl into your flea bag, and before you know what's happened you're playing "Robbers and Travellers" at the Claverings, and cursing Tim because he didn't bring more of the "small fry." It's a funny life, and there's a lot of amusement and enjoyment to be got from it. But you don't think so at 1 A.M. when you are rudely awakened by a series of crashes in the trench outside. You are pretty certain it is a German bombing party, as you miserably feel for your revolver, although it is really only a few "whizz-bangs." Next morning the humour of it strikes you. Dear old Carroll is now chez-soi, and a ripping good thing too. I will try and send you Plumridge's address in my next letter. Tons of love from

CRICK.

P.S.—On reading this over, I have come to the conclusion that, besides being illegible, this letter is egotistical. Thanks most awfully for the cakes and things, and butter. Would you send me out some more of my Kiplings (*Puck of Pook's Hill*, *Captains Courageous*, *The Light that Failed*, *Wee Willie Winkie*) and some more of those jolly little pills.

D/84.
13.1.16.

My very dear Maurice

(Good Scott !) Thanks much for your *ripping* letter. Would you please forward the enclosed to that source of all good things, Uncle Arthur, for I know not address of same. No news I am afraid, except that the weather is beastly.

C. C. C.

D/84.
13.1.16.

My dear Louie

Thank you so much indeed for the mufflers and the Xmas present. The latter, containing 2 of my particular weaknesses, the Expeditionary Force postal service cast up on Xmas day, by a strange coincidence. I wanted to look you up on my way home, but circumstances (in the guise of Boxing Day Trains) would not permit. My Aunt, it was good to be in England again. After the infernal 12 hour journey to Havre, of which you feel every sleeper. To be in an English train again is like floating on air. I had an absolutely Top-hole holiday, and am now carrying on much refreshed, both physically and mentally. I expect you are at present anything but enjoying the same beastly weather that we are. A Northerly gale with occasional hail showers. Things here are very quiet this afternoon, though as a general thing there is much more activity here than of old. We are all fervently hoping for a move this spring, as this is a pretty rotten sort of game after all. Much love to all from

Christian.

Moulin Du Vivier.
(Potez Leduc.)
15.1.16.

DEAREST MUM

Thanks so much for your letters. The war is going quite "alright," rather better than usual, since I took charge down here. Griffin is back from his course, which he appears to have enjoyed. The Carroll Bird is still enjiyin' 'isself in London town. Lord, how heavenly it would be if they transplanted us to a country where mud, beastly stinking mud, is unknown. Mud hoppers, just nasty little mud hoppers is what we are at present. We are constructing a wonderful road to keep us out of it just a little. It is about 50 yards in length, and is constructed on the old English system. First we clear away some foot of mud. Then put down chalk, then brushwood, then split logs, then broken bricks, and if that doesn't make a good road I shall just walk blindly out into the mud and be never seen again of mortal eye. I went over to see the Sappers, those masters of supply, this afternoon, and was hauled all over the countryside to see Wright's beastly roads, and horses. Though I must say the former are good, and the latter looking very well. A 'norrible misfortune will probably befall this Battery shortly. We shall probably have to go out for a so-called "rest" for a fortnight at B—y (brick). The "rest" exists solely in the imaginations of those brass-hatted ones above. Actually it means departing from this our place, and going to a spot, where there are no standings or stables, or anything which makes life worth living; and so we, after 6 months of battle, lift up our voices with exceeding bitterness, when they suggest taking us away for a fortnight. Just received the Jean Webster book and

the underclothes, many thanks. Oh, by the way, I quite forgot to tell you that I wanted my canvas basin sent out. Would you mind? Thank you. This is a very "shoppy" letter, I am afraid. Tons of love from C. C. C.

18.1.16.

My very dear Mum

Thanks most awfully for all your letters, the most recent being dated the 14th. Yes I got the parcel from Blind Institute, and yours containing socks etc., came to-night. Very many thanks. The latter was not quite robust enough to stand the Expeditionary Force posts, so the raisins arrived under separate cover, but intact. By the time this reaches you the Christmas hols will be another memory, a very pleasant one for me at any rate. The Wagon Line progresses satisfactorily. I went into A—t this afternoon and had a most glorious hot bath in a French establishment, now run (free of charge) by the R.A.M.C., it is a very real blessing as you can imagine. It is a very curious town, it always seems to me. In the Place is a statue of a dying French soldier pointing along the road to Germany. It is rather appropriate as our Infantry pass it on the way to the trenches. Let us hope we follow that road before the end of the year; certain it is, a good many will follow the longer road that he is going. Some of our noble M.P.'s make one feel positively sick, don't they? It is a wonder to me they don't try and stop our leave: "Is the Rt. Hon. gent aware that the country is spending so and so a year on a *privilege*, surely this would be better spent on munitions, which, and not the 'Tommies' (sic) are winning the war, etc. etc." I have just finished with many regrets, *Dear Enemy*. I

much enjoyed *Clementina Wing*. At the moment I am stranded for literature; except the *By*, the *Tat*, and the *Illustrated*, which came this evening. (*Punch* came yesterday.) Well, good-night, my beloved Mum.

CHRISTIAN.

18.1.16.

MY DEAR DAD

Thanks most awfully for your letters and the photos. I thought the latter very good, and very flattering! Not much to choose "in point of view of excellence," though I think I prefer the profile. I had a ripping bath this afternoon. I am writing by electric light, and I have an oil stove at my elbow, so I have achieved a measure of contentment. Situation on this front, moist, muddy, and somewhat depressing. 25 of our Vickers' fighting planes passed over here yesterday, so there has been dirty work somewhere, I expect. These holidays seem to me to have passed very quickly, much quicker than when I enjoyed the whole of them. I suppose Francis will be going to Naish this Summer, though I know what a beastly wrench it will be. One comfort is, it is as nothing to the wrenches this war has brought to some. I hope he will be going for his sake, for it is the best term, and he the right age. I think he is nearing the age when he needs a little healthy competition, in his education. Another thing is, that it is impossible to tell in which direction his bent, or weak subjects lie, till he goes to Naish, and obviously the earlier that is found out the better for him. And of course he would have Hump to break him gently to it, a great consideration. Much love from

CHRISTIAN.



Moulin du Vivier.
18.1.16.

DEAR MR. BRADBY

I am scrawling this cypher, just to let you know how I am getting on. That sounds horribly conceited, but how on earth does one open a letter gracefully? An important item in my education which has never been attended to. I am writing this from a species of attic in a mill on the Ancre, and I am at the moment in charge of our battery horses (120) and drivers (100). This, our Wagon Line, is unspeakably filthy. I never knew such quantities of malodorous mud existed. The bottomless morass has swallowed many thousands of foot tons of our toil, in the shape of roads and horse standings, but we are at last just managing to keep above the surface. But as for me, my attic contains a French bed (which is very near heaven), and an oil stove (which can be as hot as hell), so "I care for none of these things." May I be permitted to thank you for writing "For this I bare him," books are like "rays of sunshine" to us (hackneyed but appropriate), and this one of the brightest. We have been in action now for very nearly 6 months, and have so far only sustained one casualty, caused through incautiously dissecting a German fuze. Interest in German fuzes has since been at a very low ebb. Of course our Infantry have had a good few. This trench warfare is the unmitigated limit. It is warfare without the glamour and excitement. Everyone feels funk when the shells get unpleasantly close, but very few feel it in the abstract, when things are quiet. I always have a sort of feeling that it is much better to be alive, because then sooner or later you are bound to get away from this trench idiocy, whereas if you get knocked out you might have to

haunt the trenches, which would be my idea of hell. I expect other people feel that too. Thank Heaven the Officers of this battery are 4 people who get on well together. I really feel that this wretched war has made me realize one thing, *i.e.* that the secret of getting on with people with whom one is intimately associated day after day, is a toleration which criticizes not, objects not, neither does it discuss behind the back. I learned that lesson in 1. Hillmorton Road, and it occurred thus. My "pet aversion" in the house was X.Y.Z. and X.Y.Z.'s pet aversion was C. C. Carver. For a whole term I was doomed to sit opposite to him at every meal, hemmed in by Merk, Brookes, Roberts and Hope. We both started out with a preconceived loathing, spent a rotten term, and the number of times we quarrelled approximated almost exactly with the number of meals at which we were both present. Since then I have considered people for the good in them! Have you heard anything of E. P. T.? I have often wondered what became of that long-haired aborigine. Perhaps you recollect writing a report of his, to the effect that "He would work better if he had his hair cut." As a result of which T. père wrote a furious letter to his offspring, asking him if his house-master was a "buffoon." Just about what you would expect from a man who sent a son out into the world with a name like Evelyn Percival. Joseph Waite always assumed that the "Station" on which the T. family dwelt was a railway station, which supplied him with a fund of humour as inexhaustible as it was personal. I always rather liked T., though I can't think how he got into this letter. Sometime when you have a vacant moment, with nothing better to do, you would greatly oblige me by just sending a card, stating whether or

not there is any likelihood of our winning this war, as the Daily Press leads me to believe there isn't.

Yours,
C. C. CARVER.

Moulin du Vivier.
22.1.16.

MY DARLING MUM

Thanks most awfully for your letters of the 18th and 19th, and for the Kiplings, writing paper, and cakes. Please thank Dad much for shaving brush and blades. I meant to write a "pukha" letter to-night, but it is now 10 P.M. and I am too somnolent to be intelligent, so will write to-morrow. Tons of love from

CRICK.

Au Moulin.
24.1.16.

MY DEAR DAD

Only a very short scrawl "the nicht," I am afraid. Many thanks for your letters and the *B'ham Post*. We are getting quite notorious down here. The 2 mines were in the Bois Français. When it says "Some mining activity is reported North of F—t," you know the poor old Tambour has had it in the neck again. I am glad our old planes did some damage at Le Sors, after leaving here. Those beastly Fokhars are the edge, aren't they. They are essentially fighting planes, and have a fixed Machine Gun firing through the propeller. The backs of the blades are shod with bullet-proof armour, which deflects the bullets that hit, the rest going to the front, so that effect is gained by manoeuvring

the whole machine, as in a submarine. Things here are much as usual. Much love from

CHRISTIAN.

Au Moulin.
24.1.16.

MY DARLING MUM

Very many thanks for yours of the 21st, and Mott's card; what a bit of History it is. Many thanks also for the parcel containing Kiplings. Things are much as usual here, and I shall probably have another 8 days or so of this, for which I shan't be sorry. My mind is a complete blank at the moment, so I will switch off for a bit. Continued after dinner, but my brain is still uncommunicative. When my Kiplings are exhausted would you send along some Ian Hays (I have already had *A Man's Man*, and *Happy go Lucky*). I quite agree with you about Rackham and Dulac, though they are hardly to be compared side by side, as their ideals are quite different. Rackham is a realist, whose ideal is to make beauty in the commonplace. Every one of his wonderful trees has a character, look at the charm of his illustrations of the Gardens in *Peter Pan*, and of those pictures of mine "Shades of Evening" and "By the way." Rackham's great feature is detail. Dulac is essentially a colourist, one of the "greatest ever," he expresses emotions by his colourings, rather than by detail. He is figurative more than realistic, and where Rackham looks around and below him for inspiration, Dulac looks up. It is awfully good of you to send me the *Arabian Nights*. Having thus held forth, I now wish you a very good-night.

C. C. C.

Au Moulin.
27.1.16.

My darling Mum

So many as per's for your as per's so to say. You may gather that I am particularly imbecile after a parylising (that doesn't look right) afternoon's inspection by the Colonel. He found 3 faults and these be they.

(1) Horse, owing to natural peculiarity of coat, gave appearance of improperly dried back.

Me. "Did you dry . . ."

Colonel. "You can *see* he hasn't!"

(2) A horse had just bitten his own off-hind fetlock; why wasn't it bandaged up?

(3) Lids of ammunition wagons didn't hang perpendicular when open, owing to protuberance of jointed pole-bar strapped beneath.

And of course he asked me to tea, but it wasn't so bad this time. I am afraid I have forgotten the History of Wiseman Clark. I did know a Clark, he was in Charge of Sim's battery (B83) Wagon line, next to us here. Griffin and I had him to dinner before Xmas, just before he left to command a trench Mortar Battery. Since which time he has had the ill-fortune to be decapitated in an encounter with a "Whizz-bang," so that was the end of Clark, poor chap. Who should stroll into the lines, to see me, yesterday but G. A. Millar, O.R., G.F.B.; you remember him, of course. I fagged for him my first term in the house, and was in his dorm for some time. He is now a Marine Artilleryman, and he and another very jolly fellow are in charge of 15″ "Grannie," which will shortly operate from the neighbourhood of A—t. *Have* you seen to-day's news? Earth-shaking. A representative of the *Daily Mail*

has seen, positively seen the Kaiser. By the way it's his Birthday to-day. Few be his returns and evil be his fortune. Cur-r-r-se him. Thanks awfully for the little calendar, by the way. It gladdens the wall, chez-moi (sous l'étoile). I shall probably stay here for another week, and then do a 5 days' trick in the trenches. It seems probable that the whole division may move out in about 3 or 4 weeks' time. Would you send me a goodly bottel of Sodamint Tabloids please? Thanks so much. *Because of Jane* is very nice. I have very much enjoyed my Kiplings. What a real magician he is. Please send the 2 *From Sea to Sea* with next lot. Much love to all from CRICK.

In my attic.
27.1.16.

DEAR OLD HUMPOID

Yours under date of the 23rd to hand, with thanks. How mouldy, having to shift form rooms. Such an uninspiring view from the window too. You might give my very best respects to "Mossy" and his Missus and the Mossules, don't forget. Also to all the other old Masters and such folk. Remember me to Eric, remind him that he introduced me, and I have no doubt many others, to Kipling, and you can tell him that it has become a permanent attachment with *this* child at any rate. The Wagon line progresses much as usual, and we are keeping our heads above the mud on the whole. You will be thrilled to the core to hear that though I have only 3 cases of neuchrosis among the horses, I have or had had recently 5 cases of colic. It's the Kaiser's birthday to-day, Gott Strafe him for a dirty dog. It seems possible, nay even probable, that this division will be hiked out to the back of

behind, somewhere, pretty shortly. Well, cheero, old dear
Keep cheerful, like CRICK.

At the Wagon Line.
31.1.16.

DEAR ADA

Very many thanks indeed for the parcel, received "all present and correct." The question that is occupying all our thoughts is gas at present. If the wind doesn't change pretty quickly I am sure some responsible people will have a nervous breakdown. As it is they send us alarms about twice a day. I have been having rather a bad fortnight with this infernal indigestion, but you needn't tell Mum, especially as it is now taking off. I have been taking a lot of Soda Bi-carbonate which takes it away at the time, but doesn't prevent it coming on again. What I really want is an Alkaline mixture (it is entirely due to acidity), which our doctor man has been trying to get me for some time. It is really quite enough trouble fighting Germans, without one's tummy turning traitor, like this. Well, "roll on the end," as the men say in their letters.

CHRISTIAN.

Wagon Line.
31.1.16.

MY BELOVED MUM

I am afraid it is some time since I wrote, but these be troublous times, and they go quicker than one realizes. The French S. of the S. and the poor old division on our right have had a pretty rough shop, and we lost some trenches at the "Girl in the Taxi," principally owing to the use of gas. There has been a rare old dust up to-night. The old

Germans started it by bombarding the trenches to the left of our Sector, and then every blessed gun in the country side got going from about 4.30–6.30. They made such a row they quite spoilt my tea (and perusal of *Punch*). It seems probable that considerable changes are shortly pending on the divisional front. We shall probably have rather a different job, but stay where we are, as I am sure we shall continue to do till the end of time. Carroll and I quite hope that our monthly visit to the trenches will be curtailed. We are being rather annoyed by a beastly 4·7 Battery, which has planted itself about 500 yards in front of us. He is the pet aversion of an old friend of ours across the way, affectionately known as "Smokey Bill." He shoots frequently at these wretched 4·7's, and terrifies the horses. William (in the distance) "Boom-oop," here she comes, whooooooooooo (must be right over us now, I wonder if I could get behind that tree) OOO CRASH! no 200 yards short, etc. Good old Smokey. We have had an East wind these last few days, and with all this gas about people have been getting a bit jumpy. The poor old Battery have had their tube helmets on 6 times in the last 3 days for false alarms, and they aren't feeling a bit cheery. I had just got up to the Battery yesterday, and was chatting to Griffin, when they sent through from the trenches GAS, so I had to rush back here and give the alarm, and of course by the time I got to the phone it was all over, and I rode up again. Griffin and I played the Gramophone all the evening, with the telophone between us, listening for the magic sound --. .- ... (gas), it struck me as comic. Well, now I will stop this "Gassy" letter. Much love to Aunt Dora,

And you from me.

At the Wagon Line.
2.2.16.

My dear Dad

Very many thanks for your letters (I got the one dated 30th this evening) and for the Mags. etc. We have had 2 lovely days to-day and yesterday, I think we are thro' the worst of the winter now. The horses are all fat and well, and beginning to lose their winter coats, another month should see them looking very well indeed. At this moment the Wagon Line is looking cleaner and dryer than it has for many a long day. Long may it remain so. There has been a lot of strafing hereabouts recently. The old Germans have been trying to push South of the Somme, and about 3 miles south of us. The prevailing wind being East, there has been a lot of gas about, and a superabundance of false alarms. A case of Wolf! Wolf! with a vengeance. Last Monday night there was the deuce of a strafe on the three sectors left of ours and they put in a goodish few gas shells. These shells are used to temporarily neutralize an area, or silence a battery. The gas is quite harmless, in fact rather pleasant to smell, like almonds, but it irritates the eyes and nose, making them run. The huns usually push over a lot of these on to a trench area and any Artillery Observing Stations he may know of, and then trots across to try for some prisoners, in which he is occasionally bound to be successful. It was pretty thick up at the Battery, but we could only just smell it down here. It is getting on for 2 months since I was up at the Battery, and I have rather lost touch with the "feel" of this front.

3.2.16. I left off here last night, as I was summoned to dinner with the Colonel. Reason, because Slade (the Adjutant) wanted me to do a bit of work for Duff, our

Orderly Officer. Theoretically the job was simple, at 11 A.M. the Sappers would explode a mine. When they did, I was to be at our Infantry Battalion H.Q. and send a code word by phone to our Battery and the 4·5 Howitzers. All I had to do was see that the lines to Batteries were all right, arrange with Griffin in the front trenches to let me know when it went up, and find out from the infantry colonel how soon after it he wanted us to fire. I saw rocks ahead. Slade hadn't met the Colonel, I had. As I expected when I broached the matter to him, (the colonel) he got wildly excited. He didn't know anything about it, *as usual*, (accusingly) he had not been consulted. He was told it had all been arranged, and now here was I asking him a question he had no idea of. No, I mustn't ask the R.E. *or* Griffin, because the Germans would tap the message (an absolute impossibility) and give it away. Come along and talk to the Brigadier. This was not a great success as he conducted a monologue in Hindustani with the Staff Captain, who didn't understand it. However, settled that I was to fire immediately afterwards. Then I telephoned to Griffin. At about 10.59 I got a message from Griffin to say that the R.E. wanted us to fire at 11.3 and 12 noon, hastily told the Batteries I wouldn't fire till 3 minutes after mine. After the mine went off like a young earthquake a quarter of an hour late, I made arrangements with our Brigade for the 12 noon shoot, having fixed up ammunition, where to shoot, and synchronized all watches. I got a message at 11.59½ saying the Infantry Brigadier was going round the trenches, and wanted the shoot "washed out" as he didn't want to stir up a Strafe. Just stopped Batteries in time. "But 'twas a famous victory," and I am jolly glad I am not Orderly Officer. I see the old Zepps have been over the

Midlands, and did damage in Staffs, I hope it wasn't in our corner of it. Much love from C. C. C.

Wagon Line.
Monday, 7.2.16.

MY VERY DARLING MUM

At 5 P.M. to-day I bade a glad, and I hope a long, farewell to D.3. A last look at fair F—— and then awa' down Queen's Avenue with a thankful heart. I had a frightfully peaceful time, with only a few whizz bangs over. The fighting 7th Division have taken over D.3 and Sectors to right, and as their Artillery was not up till to-night, I lived with a Company of the 2nd Border Regiment, and *extremely* nice they are. A jolly good fighting Regiment. Thanks *most* awfully for the books, with the ones in the parcel from Ada they make a top hole selection. So many thanks for your letters. Devonshire sounds ripping. It is difficult to realize that the Zepps have been over Birmingham. It was awful luck their getting so near first time; they won't do it again though. In any case Harborne is absolutely safe of course, as they wouldn't waste powder and shot on it, with such good targets round about to distract them. I certainly wouldn't think of shifting. I don't think one does that sort of thing for a Boche. We'll make the swines pay for any damage they do, though, in a way they won't forget. The Captain goes on leave again on Thursday. Will write more shortly. Tons of love to Aunt D and you. From CRICK.

Moulin du Vivier.
9.2.16.

My dear Dad

Thanks awfully for your letter. Some raid. But I think it extremely unlikely that the Zepps will do anything like so well next time, if they get there at all. Still I don't at all like the idea of the war penetrating to my native 'ome. I bade farewell to D.3 on Monday, as far as the front trenches go, and we now permanently reinforce E.1 the Sector to the left, the 7th Division (Gordons, Borders, Warwicks, Cheshires, Devons, etc.) having taken over our lot. This means we do not supply an F.O.O. and only fire (seriously) in case of emergency. We are the only battery who have not moved either guns or Wagon line, that's what it is to have a good Battery Commander. We are at present in action next to T. R.H.A. I went into A—t to have a bath yesterday. When I arrived I remembered I had forgotten such necessary little items as towel, soap, and sponge, so despatched J. Sparke my faithful retainer, to fetch them, while I looked up G. A. Millar, O.R., G.F.B. and had a long talk with him, about other times and places. Just before I got to the baths there was a Whizz and a bang, and some Shrapnel burst round us. They put one through a house about 15 yards further along the road, so I nearly had no use for that bath. It is a humourous life. As I hastily dismounted, I saw a fat Frenchman disappearing into a cellar, leaving a diminutive donkey and cart in the middle of the road. I hauled my pony past, he appeared to imagine the disturbance emanated from the moke, who remained unimpressed. I got round the corner when a runaway G.S. Wagon, with 2 elephantine A.S.C. horses charged round the corner, the driver conspicuous by his absence. It didn't

occur to me to wonder what happened to the donkey till I reviewed events from the safety of my bath. And I never shall know, a riddle to the end of time. I had a letter from Mott this evening, and also one from Kelly; the latter appears to be enjoying life. Much love from

C. C. C.

Wagons.
10.2.16.

My beloved Mum

Ver' many thanks for yours received this eve. Millar drifted in to tea to-day, and we had the usual chat about old times. I had a great ride with Carroll this afternoon. We rode over to the Bois des Tailles, North of B—— (vicar of), in quest of the O.C. Wood. We found a lot of Wagon lines ensconced there, but no one knew anything about the O.C. We got thoroughly lost in the wood, and momentarily expected the O.C. to leap into our path and shout

I'm not Mr. Cupid altho' I've a bow;
I'm just Robin Hood of the wood wood, ho!

But he didn't. I am afraid he is a wood myth. We are at present inundated with Attachés (3), who are a beastly nuisance. The Captain goes on leave to-morrow, and I go up to the Battery, taking an attaché with me. Much love from

Christian.

D/84.
11.2.16.

Ob, dear Boy

So many thanks for your lettuah. I am writing this to the strains of Loch Lomond. Take my advice old nut and

stick to History. I have seen a lot of Millar lately, in fact he came over to tea with me yesterday. As you may remember, he and Vertue (Killed) and Wolff, were History Specialists in lower bench. As a matter of fact I think History is the one useful thing one gets out of school, and I certainly wouldn't chuck it for the sake of marks in other beastly subjects which are damn-all use to you there or anywhere else. It strikes me as giving in to the God of Mammon (disguised as marks). Distinctly weak, dear old chap. As a matter of fact I believe your job is schoolmastering although of course you, like everyone else at school, won't hear of it. One doesn't realize what an idyll a good school is, until one has left it for a bit. A master's is one of the best jobs going. He has better material to train than the soldier, he trains it better, and to a better end. He teaches a subject he is keen on (History and English say) and he is never bored, for he is always studying the one thing worth studying, man in the making. Suppose you stick to History you are starting your career right away. This being the case you must expect to meet with distasteful difficulties, (1) That by so doing you do not shoot up the school at quite 1000 miles per term. (2) Do not get the glory which illuminates the fair head of 2nd Lieut. T. Smith, who enters the Army (temporarily) at much too early an age, and consequently makes a B.F. of himself.

You are extremely well educated, able, intelligent, and hard working (I ought to know). To such an one the world is open, make it serve you, and certainly don't serve *it*. I have spoken. C. C. C.

Just before the battle.
12.2.16.

DEAR MRS. NAPIER-CLAVERING

So very many thanks for your long letter. I must say one feels awfully sorry for the people in the Black Country; after all England has done very little for them that they should fight or be bombed for her. I headed this letter in the above sensational fashion, because we just had a message telling us to be ready to fire an "S.O.S." any old moment this afternoon or evening. Oh! "windy" and excitable H.Q. you can't thrill cynical and blasé old birds like us, with these frightful messages. As you say there has been a lot of unnecessary energy on the front lately. For the reason, see politics. Personally I am quite persuaded that it is all part of the big spoof in the Balkans. I suppose that William thought that during his triumphal trip to see Ferdie, a few feats of arms on the Western front were indicated, and, brilliant notion, some nice tame prisoners to walk behind his chariot. He picked the French for a defeat, and us for the prisoners. Consequently the old Huns took Frise, a delightful little place more or less completely surrounded by marsh and river, and took a few dug-out Frenchmen, who were sitting there wondering if it was true there was a war on. *We* had the great German practical joke party turned on to us. Their modus operandi needs a word of explanation. People (in the near East for instance) do not always realise that when you have trenches 100 yards apart, and have an average amount of modern artillery, you can *always* take the front line trenches, and (as the average British soldier has a funny little habit of sticking to his trench), some prisoners. Consequently these humorous little people put over a few hundred

lachrymatory shell, and a considerable number of others, and, under cover of the smoke and gas, come over and gather in what remains of the occupants of the trench. They are quite tame, oh quite. Anybody who has survived a bombardment will tell us why; at present, we are having quite a delightful time as we are up in the firing line,—Without having too much to do. We shoot over a different bit of land now, and are only called on in case of attack, instead of for every ½d rifle grenade which comes over. The Captain is on leave at the moment, but I expect things will have got a move on before my old turn comes round, to judge by the signs of the times. Not the least (though according to its despairing C.O. the last), of these is the appearance, I should say forecast of the appearance, of a—sh! commanded by a man I fagged for at Rugby. Gee! some sentence. He appears to have had some hectic times with his little weapon (each of its shells costs £105). When he was with the Indian division the Ghurkas used to worship it, before going into the trenches, to the great confusion of its High Priest. Most guns fired many thousands of rounds at Loos, but Millar's only fired 130. This entailed seven days and nights of unceasing labour. They brought down 12 trees on top of themselves, completely buckled their platform, broke every conceivable nut and bolt, and finished up grandly with the gun and nothing else. That's the sort of toy I like, as long as it is not firing at me. I am so sorry you have been having domestic upsets. Servants are the limit. Our cook certainly can't give notice, but he can't do anything else either. He can cook a chicken, his one accomplishment, but he can't pluck it. Some cook. Well, about the war, I suppose I must stop talking rot, and get on with it.

Yours,

C. CARVER.

D/84.
12.2.16.

My darling Mum

So very many thanks for your letters of the 8th and 9th, your efforts to get your family into safety appear to have met with what you might call a warm reception, from all quarters. Never mind, after the war you (and Henry Ford) will get the credit you deserve. What humour. I am having a very comfortable time with old Griffin up at the Battery, long may peace reign. This is a very scrappy scrawl to-night as I have more or less written myself out in answer to a long and very kind letter from Mrs. N. C., at your instigation. I have also heard from Mott, Kelly, and G. F. recently. The latter prophesies the end of the war, somewhere towards the end of 1917. I don't know about O'Zyder, but per M.F.O. I should say there would be no duty. As for T.P. I should plump for a commission in the Rifle Brigade every time, and if he is going to do that he had better not come out here. Well, good night dear old thing, keep cheery.

C. C. C.

Battery.
14.2.16.

My darling Mum

So very many thanks for your letter, dated 11th. I hope the naval engagement rumour was more or less founded on fact, but I doot. Everything here is more or less cool, calm, and collected. Please thank Aunt Dora most awfully for the excellent cake which is in progress of consumption. The butter from Devonshire is absolutely top-hole, in fact we wouldn't exactly object to some more. A lovely morning

the morn', and went over to E. I. to poop off a few rounds. We have at present got a curious little insect called P. attached to us, by profession (and no doubt instinct) a manufacturer of lady's clothing. Rather a horrid little fellow, but Griffin and I extract quite a lot of amusement out of him. Absolutely nothing to tell you I fear me, so *tons* of love from CRICK.

Battery.
18.2.16.

MY VERY DEAR MUM

So many thanks for all your letters. And how is dear old Birmingham looking, after the Vale of Heddon; *some* dirty we surmise. This perfectly idiotic remark is the outcome of a mind vainly seeking some interesting item to impart. Slop! Good news about Erzerum, just about time we had some too. The effect of the recent storm on this little stake in the land, is that it is leaking copiously, so that every time I put a record on the Gramophone I get a cataract down my neck. Thus do we bend the elements to our will, but as a matter of fact I went and had a bath in A—— this morning where I met the doughty Millar. I never go into A—— without offering a petition to Mars that I may never see an English town anything like that. It is really perfectly ghastly, the most depressing place *I* have ever struck, especially on a rainy day. Well, very much love to all from C. C. C.

Battery.
18.2.16.

MY DEAR DAD

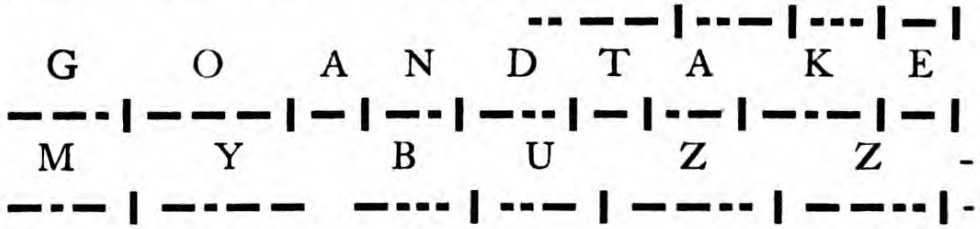
Very many thanks for the letters, parcels, and tabloids,

which latter have done me a lot of good. The weather for the last few days has been beaucoup de beastly, as doubtless it has been with you, while it has rained steadily all to-day. I am afraid there is very little of interest to record. We have got another officer posted to the Battery, by name Beaumont, who was to arrive to-day, so I have not seen him yet. Heaven send he is a gentleman, that is all we ask, nothing else matters. If a man is a ranker he is all right, but it is these people whom one gets attached to the Battery, who are not gentlemen and will never make Officers, and who are not in the ranks, where they might be some use, because "the Guv'nor" has got plenty of "oof." We have got a little creature with us at present who is the unmitigated limit.

D/84.
19.2.16.

My dear Hump

I hope this finds Naish enjoying all good health and prosperity in this term of sporadic Rugger, epidemics, and Oranges for 4-o'clocks (do they still exist?). As for us we have been storm-swept for the last week, and now the wind has exhibited unutterable bad taste in going round to the East. Gas, my lad, gas. Not (we trust) of the poison variety, but Xylobromide, which makes you weep exceedingly bitterly, and consequently curse the name of Germany with a loud voice. Well; I M U S T



G O A N D T A K E

M Y B U Z Z -

I N G C L A S S , so



cheerio, C. C. C.

At the Wagon Line.
21.2.16.

My darling Mum

Thanks so much for yours of last Friday. What rotten news about poor old Stella. I saw in yesterday's *Morning Post* that Harold Carver (K.O. L'pools) is wounded. Do you remember that time M. and I went up to Birkenhead after Borth. We saw quite a lot of H.Q.C. then, in the intervals of fighting hooligans and recalcitrant railwaymen. I remember him coming in one evening flushed with battle, to play tiddlewinks. We little thought what curious roads some of that party would follow. The explanation of the "Mufti," is an order to the effect (on second thoughts I suppose one ought not to write about it, but the idea is connected with keeping civilian and military traffic separate). At the moment Carroll, Bowman, and I are at Wn Line and Griffin, Lait, and the Captain at the Battery. The Captain got back from leave yesterday, and looks well. He had an awful crossing going. Bowman is a new man posted to the Battery. He is an Australian, and seems a sound fellow. It makes me feel quite insular, the Captain from Canada, Carroll from Peru, Griffin from Chile, and now Bowman from Australia. The latter came over last September. I took Bowman into A—— this morning, where we met Parker, who introduced us to that most excellent place the Café de la Station, where one can purchase Beer, of no mean vintage. Well, I think that's

all me noos, so much love to Francis, Ada and all, from C. C. C.

Battery.
23.2.16.

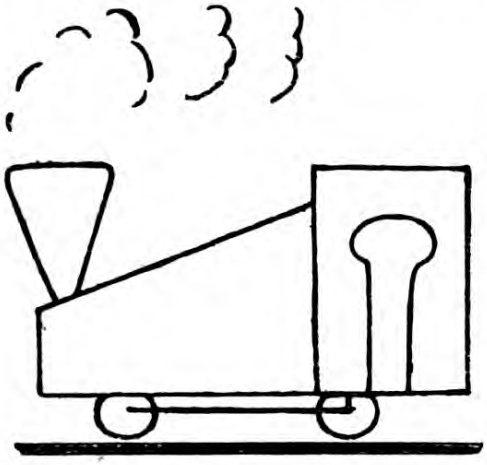
My dearest Mum

Only just a word the nicht as the hour is late. It is really phenomenally stupid of me not to have let you know before about them there wither pads. We don't need them I think, though it is exceedingly kind of her to offer them. Please thank her very much, and apologise for my remissness in answering. Our horses don't suffer from them at all, and are really only liable to get them from a badly-fitting rug. Much love from C. C. C.

P.S.—Just got yours of 12th, 13th, 14th. Griffin says a crane is smaller than a heron, but he won't swear to it, in fact, he thinks they are very much alike.

Our position is as follows. The 7th division took over old D3 Section from 18th, and all the 18th have moved further North except us. We are an island of 18th Div. (X Corps) in 7th Div. (XIII corps) and reinforce and enfilade the most Southern 18th Div. Sector. From our O.P. we get a beautiful view of the Country behind 18th Div$^{l.}$ front, which can't be seen at all from opposite, so we provide most of the "Intelligence." We have got top-hole telescopes, so, while the Infantry are lucky to see 1 German per week, we see several hundred a day, also Wagons, carts, horses, motors, bikes, and huns in every kind of uniform, and doing every kind of job, they little know with what interest their "trivial round" is watched. And I must not forget the train. It never appears at the same time from

one day to another and has the most delightfully quaint engine.



At Battery.

MY DEAR DAD 23.2.16.

Very many thanks for your letters. We had a rare old Strafe yesterday. I think the Boches were rather fed up with our mining, must have been worrying 'em a bit so they decided on some dirty doings on the old Tambo. They started the deuce of a great bombardment about dusk last night, to which we responded heartily. The Germans came over but got a jolly hot shop, and shoved back in a hurry. Some of them, however, stayed with us. I came up to the Battery from Wn Line after dinner last night, as we expected a hectic night, and a gas attack at dawn, neither of which occurred. To-day the landscape is snow clad, and the temperature is to match, in fact more so, so to say. They put over a lot of big stuff last night. Net result, in this battery, one man slightly wounded, and a direct hit on a dugout. The latter went through, but didn't hurt the 2 men inside. The 2 batteries on our right had 5 casualties, one gun knocked out, and a Major hit in the head ; which was jolly bad luck. I see the French brought down a Zepp down South ; pretty work. Well, much love from

C. C. C.

Our little Igloo in the Arctic
(obviously).
25.2.16.

"Dear Father, Mother, Aunt and Bro

It is freezing cold and snowing and we have had a few shells over and I wish they would give it up and it is awful when it is cold and poor brother Ernest in the trenches, and it isn't so bad in the summer in action." Thus speaks Gunner Batram and so say I. We have had a howling Easterly Gale, plus snow all to-day. We had a young battle last Monday, and since then have used no other (shells). However, we are all quite cheery and the men are full of beans, which they vent on a football, during the dinner hour. You ought to see Gunner Jones fulfilling the duties of Forward, half, goal, and frequently ball. He is possessed of enormous vitality, no stability, and a boundless reserve of advice, exhortation, and wit. Such is Gunner Jones, you may see him bite the mud not once but 20 times a minute.
Well Buenos Noyes, C. C. C.

D/84, B.E.F.
26.2.16.

My darling Mum

So many thanks for your letter of the 23rd. I may as well warn you beforehand that I have no news whatever to impart. I quite understand Humphrey's feeling, having gone through it myself; letters are a link with home which one doesn't care to tamper with. Personally I always used to like to write on paper brought from home for the same reason. Distant days they seem sometimes.

Well, having broken off here to have a long talk with

Griffin about our respective schools, I now feel so stupid that I will say good-night. C. C. C.

29.2.16.

My dear Aunt Dora

Very many thanks for your letter. I envy you being at Weatherbury, snow or no snow, but I am afraid my lady Mab will find it a trifle dull after Devonshire. We have had the same beastly weather here, gales, snow, and frost. The latter is our worst enemy, as the subsequent thaw does far more damage to the trenches than any German shell could do. The only thing to be said for General Fevrier is that he preserves an attitude of malevolent impartiality, and annoys the huns as much as he does us. I am afraid we get a lot more credit for enduring hardships than we deserve. By us I mean the gunners. The Infantry have a mouldy time in the trenches, everyone else has a comfortable time but frightfully dull, whereas we, through no merit of our own, take part in everything that is going, and are sufficiently far back to live in comfort. For instance, to-day we had time to finish our tea in comfort. Then we had a strafe and boosted off 175 rounds, and everything was over in time for dinner. Not, as the newspaper would have you believe, bully beef out of a tin can, but

Accompanied by ZUYDER!

- Soup
- Fish
- Bœuf Rôti á la Heinz
- Apricots or mince pies
- Dessert
- Coffee

I mean to say—what could be nicer? Yes, Mum told me

that "the Cube" had been married. He and the "Square man" are excellent fellows, though perhaps not possessed of a very nimble wit. I must now break off, to write the "Operation Report." Yours,

CHRISTIAN.

At the Battery.
29.2.16.
4.30 P.M.

MY VERY DARLING MUM

Thanks so much for your letters. The cider arrived yesterday, in excellent case, and jolly good it is. Darrn! I likes o' zuyder. Top hole. The snow is now all gone, which is a relief, and so will we be, shortly, which will be a "relief," but a beastly nusiance all the same. After almost exactly seven months here, the old division is going to trek. We are going somewhere back o' beyont here, and I understand will probably form part of the 4th Army, who are taking over from the French up A—— way (you know, where the cloth comes from). However, it is nice to have a change, in a way, and we badly needed a chance of getting the whole Battery together and giving them some drill. Stirring times these. I wonder if the French can keep Verdun. I should say it was even money on it myself. I see from the German wireless that William is down there, "and King of the Battle," isn't it appalling? There was some kind of raid on last night, as we could see gun-flashes and search-lights to the south-west, I wonder if it could be as far as Paris. There was something over *us*, but what it was I don't know. I held out that it was a motor lorry on the B—— to A—— road, which runs just behind us here,

but the Captain and Griffin swore it wasn't. From what other people say, however, they must have been right. Things here are much as usual; we have just had half a dozen rounds of big stuff over, aimed at T. Battery on our right. One of the splinters hit the Captain's coat, although we were a good 300 yards from the burst. I was rather amused at the antics of a small dog, who was rushing about outside our trenches this morning, when they were being lightly shelled with Whizz-bangs. I have never seen such appallingly bad shooting in my life; but bad or good, faithful Fido did not care a button for shells, and rushed up to each one as it burst with great enthusiasm. They eventually put one about two feet away from him, but beyond knocking him over, he didn't seem to mind it, in fact, it rather quickened his interest. I wish we were all like that, so I do.

9 P.M. Since I left off we have had a little "strafe," in which we did our bit to the extent of 175 rounds. It appears to have been a repetition of last Monday week's stunt. Well, very much love from

CHRISTIAN.

2.3.16.

DEAR M.

I address you thus briefly because my stock of humorous openings is nearly expended. Thanks so much for your last letter, and for sending on the Bonhopper's which I enclose. Also please find one brochure, small, under this cover. I send it because the fact in cold print, that the "Flobbery Beounder" wears kilts, is one of the few good things the war has done. If I only had a nice little drum

now, then I should be quite *à la* illustrated papers, for I am writing this seated on a packing-case, our stock of chairs and sofas having been encased in sandbags and removed, preparatory to our shift to the back to-morrow. Well, I think we can consider ourselves very lucky, as we have passed the winter in comfort, and to-morrow we can make our bow after an Act I of 6 months' duration, and withdraw with only 2 or 3 casualties. I wonder where we shall come into action next; wherever it is I suppose we shall have a month or 2 in rest first, though the rest implies immunity from shell fire only. Well, we are about to partake, so I will here close.

C. C. C.

2.3.16.

My dear Dad

Many thanks for your letter (vague term). The cider arrived in excellent trim, and is generally appreciated, especially by *this* child. It is sad to think that this is our last night in this little "stake in the land" which we have lived in, and fought from, for over 6 months. We seem to know everything so well, and all the familiar landmarks seem like old friends now that it comes to leaving them. Even the unnecessarily aggressive banging at present going on outside is part of the game, and "a lot of sausages on the poor old Bois Français to-night" is the only comment it elicits. The paroxysm of moving has thrown up a lot of unusual objects to-day; item, a plush sofa (looted from F—t Ry. Station by the French), item, the mess table and leather chairs (from the same doubtful source), item, a large box and trestles (my bed), also many boxes, and assorted accumu-

lations of all kinds, including many sheets of that valuable commodity corrugated iron, Lord knows we couldn't leave *that* behind, after all the trouble we had in getting it from the R.E. We only need a brace of mattresses, and a bird cage to make us the complete house removal; cats and dogs, we have plenty. Well, there is some satisfaction in knowing that we have stuck to the place for 6 months, as this beastly line wriggles so much, that we are more or less in full view of the Germans, to a flank. This position, however, and the 2 to the right, is now considered too dangerous for any battery to succeed us, and so the whole place will shortly be pulled down for the sake of the much wrought iron, and goodly beams that in it are, wherewith to build a new position. But that does not concern us, for to-morrow we shall be over the hills and far away and our place will know us no more. We are going where *d*rains *a*re *o*f *u*nusually *r*ancid *s*pecies,[1] an idiotic remark, which has a significance largely pristine. Much love from

CHRISTIAN.

6.3.16.

MY DARLING MUM

Thanks so very much for your letter of 3rd. I am so sorry I have been such a poor correspondent lately, but settling in does not give one much time for writing. I am writing this in my billet, at the witching hour of 11.45 A.M., so don't expect any scintillation. The said billet is a spotlessly clean, bright little room. Red tiles, blue door, bright wall paper and eiderdown, and a top-hole bed. Rather an old house in the Place, just underneath the

[1] DAOURS.

church, an imposing edifice. The hall has some rather fine old oak, chipped about with bullets from "soixante dix" as Madame will tell you, with very little encouragement. This is a fairly large, very prosperous little town, about 6 miles by road from A—s. There are some nice big houses on the main road up to the line, and it is delightful to be in a place you can actually lose yourself in. Our chronicle from Thursday last is as under. We successfully moved out from the firing line just before dark on Friday evening, and arrived at the place in which I stayed at the Mairie, in pitch darkness and pouring rain, and had to get into strange lines. The following morning after breakfast, it started snowing, and we got out, and under way under the most miserable conditions we have struck yet. It snowed hard for the whole of the 12 mile march down, through very pretty country (although we didn't appreciate it). We discovered that the Battery lines were in an open field, and we lifted up our voices and cursed, saying very bitterly, "If this be peace, give us war," and then the watering place, my sainted Aunt. In the principal square of the town. While conducting a hectic and precarious watering order, I met Forshall, and extracted his news, while repelling the onslaughts of various Ammunition Columns, who desired to water at the same time. We have got a top-hole Mess, and kitchen in a very nice farm, replete with pigeons, fowls, sheep, rabbits, dogs, cats, horses, etc. Griffin and Carroll went in to A—s to-day, and returned with the cook's cart laden to the brim with food and luxuries. Our Mess bill will be something colossal. As far as I can see the people here are nice without exception. The Bowman and I went for a walk around yesterday, and landed up at a lock on the Somme canal, where we made the acquaint-

ance of a new branch of the versatile R.E., *i.e.* as Marines with a Sapper Quarter Master Sergeant on the bridge of a neat little tug, straight from the Mersey, pulling a colossal barge of A.S.C. supplies. I shall not be a Motor Transport Officer's servant in the next war, as I had intended, I am going to be an R.E. lock-man, then I shall wear a white band with a blue anchor round my arm, and ably assisted by a nice French girl, will watch the ships go sailing by. After that we went and admired the town pumping engine, working away by itself, through a glass door. An old lady came out with a key, and wanted us to go inside, but we had to get back to stables, via the Railway bridge. A French sentry furiously ordered us away, but instantly saw reason when I mildly suggested, "Peut-on passer à travers la rivière, Monsieur." Funny, I wonder what he *thought* we wanted. Mais, que voulez-vous? Well, it's struck twelve long ago, so a very good-night to you.

C. C. C.

12.3.16.

My darling Mum

It has been a lovely day here to-day, and we have much enjoyed ourselves. We had a Brigade church parade this morning attended in force by the Officers (by orders). Quite a good little service. Bowman and I went for a long ride this afternoon. Out over the level crossing by the station, then along a track leading through the marshes until we came to the canal. Getting on to the tow-path, however, entailed crossing an innocent little ditch, apparently about 1 ft. deep. Bowman's mare effectually demonstrated that the case was otherwise, far otherwise, and she was pretty

well mired when we got her out. So there we were, so near and yet so far, and we had to ride round about 2 miles each to meet again. Then we rode through the Bois l'Abbesse, in which the primroses, violets, bluebells, etc., are up and blooming already. Then we rode through that little down just East of the wood, and so home. Yesterday the same 2 young officers were to be seen proceeding on duty to A—s. There they transacted official monetary transactions at the Banque de France, made a tour of inspection of the fine Cathedral, made use of the hot bathing facilities provided by the municipality, took practical tests of Paws' tea-rooms, and after making sundry minor purchases, returned on completion. From which you may gather that we had a jolly good time, and enjoyed ourselves immensely. And the dusk witnessed the unusual spectacle of 2 equestrian figures, trotting furiously, a packet of fish under one arm, and a packet of chocolates under the other, each 1 as it were, you know what I mean. Well, pretty shortly we return to our first love (?). There we shall enjoy the unique position of extreme right of the British Army in France, and guardians of the gate of the Somme. Why we might have to repel a submarine attack any old day. Please tell Aunt Dora that I am most awfully sorry I forgot to thank her for the mittens. Will you say that they are just right as to size, and are extremely useful. Well, I think that is all for the moment. Very much love from

CHRISTIAN.

16.3.16.

MY DARLING MUM

Thanks so much for your letters of 11th, 12th, and 13th, received to-night. "So stupid" of me not to cross

the cheque. I must say this kind of life, where one's income carries on by itself, is very bad for naturally unfinancial blokes like me. Also "so stupid" (as Griffin would say) not to "as you were" the rumour about Arras. I meant the remark "Drains are of unusually rancid species" to convey the necessary information, the system being the same as in "Telegrams." Is that clear, now? You see the line will run

Belgians.

British { 2 / 1 / 3 Same? / d. 84.→4

French.

This place is pronounced to rhyme with "wooers" and is on the same old river S——. We are going to the "Girl in the taxi," and there will shoot over the marshes of the said river. Since the show at Frise, however, it is not the quiet haven of rest that it was when we were there last August. The great point about it is that the hun can only approach by one causeway across the marsh, so the responsibility is practically nil. We have had glorious summery weather these last few days, and have been enjoying life, and at the same time putting in a 13 hour day. Great Scotland, how exactly I can see and hear J. N. saying "Lor," it is a jolly shrewd remark of old Hump's. Thanks so much for the cake, sock, and book parcel, an all round clinker. Chances of leave, I am afraid, are very much below par. To be exact all leave was stopped, il y a quinze jours, and it is impossible to say when it will start again. Well, think of us going into harness again next Monday, much love to

Aunt D., Francis (thank him much for letter) and Ada.
From CRICK.

P.S.—Socks are top-hole, Stockings I don't need.

17.3.16.

MY DEAR DAD

St. Patrick's day again, and our Irishmen have duly appeared with the regulation weed in their headgear. Well, we go up to the line again on Monday. Everybody seems to be in a state of wind up about it, so as we never by any chance agree with anyone, it has rather an opposite effect on us. However, come what may, our little stay down here has been very pleasant, and it is ripping to get the whole battery together again and do some good old drill orders. The latter means a sort of private field day, with galloping into action and cursings of the Battery Leader (2nd Lt. C. C. Carver, R.F.A.). Not much thrilling news, but I shall have lots of fresh lies to impart, when we settle down into action. Much love from

CRICK.

Scene 3.
The Original valley, O.P. side.
23.3.16.

DEAREST MUM

And here we are again. The other side of the valley this time, on a nice road under some trees. We have good deep French made dug-outs in a small copse about 200 yards in rear. I must say this is a delightful little corner of the war, with good views all around. But the whole place is absolutely pitted with shell holes, mostly from the

F—— show. Straight ahead of us is the valley, then the steep opposite slope where we were formerly in action, then on top a sort of plateau with lots of quaint little criss cross valleys, with Hangars. Beaucoup de shell hole. Then we arrive (absolutely breathless, for we have been walking with the Captain) at a large and well-known wood. It has always been our ambition to have an observing station in this wood, and now we have got one. We wend our way through the wood, admiring the liberal display of cowslips and anemones it affords, and prudently hiding behind trees as some shells keep falling in the near vicinity. Finally we arrive at the front of the wood, the shelling becomes more aggressive, and the Captain can't find the Observing Station, awful moment. Ah, there it is. No. Yes it is, and down an enlarged rabbit hole we dive. Phew.— Well, here we are at all events, and 200 feet immediately below us is V—— village and the river, and away and away along the river the view seems to stretch for ever. Military significance apart, it is one of the finest views I have ever seen and some spring when we can have the cowslips without the obus, which we are at present plumping into the village below, we will come and have another look. What say?

And how are you now, up and quite better I hope. Anyhow take it slow old dear. Gardez-vous. Leave has re-opened and Boffin goes on Saturday. As Carroll goes before me this time, of course, D.V. I should get a leave about the end of May or early June. Would you send me some more soda-mints please? The last consignment of cakes and butter and ties and needles arrived in good form. Much love from CHRISTIAN.

Battle Dug-outs,
c/o E. Surreys.
30.3.16.

My dear Dad

Thanks so much for your letter of the 24th. I got the papers all righto. I am at present fulfilling the rôle of F.O.O. under very pleasant conditions. C'est à dire I dine, sleep, and breakfast with the East Surreys, our old friends, and I spend my days in the Observing Station, which, as you know, is in a wood, on top of a cliff. Below it is a small hamlet from which the wood takes its name, then comes the river, then a sort of no man's land peninsula enclosed by a loop of the river, then the German side of the loop. Out from the village runs a causeway, and at the end, in the peninsula, is our advanced post, which was mentioned in the communiqué the other day. That happened the night before we came. Straight away for a long way runs the river, to the left is the small village of C., about 2000 yards, to the right the better known place of F., where the recent fighting was. It is about as interesting a sector as you could wish for. There are practically no trenches, so you can fairly often catch the hun in the open, and you can see all his trains and motor transport, etc., in rear. The Sector runs from village to village inclusive. The neck of the Peninsula (the Manchesters christened it Trafford Park) is to the right, and is more or less occupied by F. That is, the canal runs across, to cut out the loop, and the village is principally warehouses, etc., by the locks. The hun scheme of defence there is simple, 2 block houses at either side of the neck, connected by a heavily wired trench. About 25 yards from the near block house is the village pump, and thereby

hangs a tale, for it is a constant temptation to brother Bosche. He evidently relieved to-day, and the new garrison apparently thought they had struck a good thing. 2 rounds were sufficient to convince the far block-house that it was unwise to stand in the open and admire the view. Then I turned my attention to the village pump. The range is only about 1500, and with a good telescope you are absolutely on the spot. Sure enough, Fritz and Hans strolled over to get water. I gave 'em 1 round and they both retired down the well. Then Fritz strolled back with his hands in his pocket. Encouraged by this, out came Karl, with bucket. I laid to catch him ½ way home, watched him fill his bucket, and sent down order to fire as he turned to get back. My Aunt! it pitched about 5 yards from him and a lovely burst. It made him stagger some, but I think a small bank saved him, and he scooted in. Fritz wouldn't believe him and came out to have a look; another round, he retired convinced and hastily. Finally poor little Hans, in the well, did the distance from the well to the house in ⅕ under even time, I gave him a round just to show him I hadn't missed him. We have got a French soldier attached to us, who is a native of C. and knows the country like the back of his hand. He is an excellent fellow, one of the best, and he simply lives to kill Huns. The principal industry here is phosphates, and he ran phosphate mines before the war. He joined his regiment at the out-break of war, leaving his mother and fiancée in C. and of course hasn't heard a word from them since. He has been through the fighting in Lorraine, and a few weeks ago he came up here. C. is practically in the trenches and is shelled every day, but his mother and fiancée still live here, and he introduced me over the

telescope the other evening, when they where picking salad in the garden. Rather amazing isn't it? Well, for this child, bed. Much love from CHRISTIAN.

30.3.16.

My DARLING MUM

I am very sleepy and all mes nouvelles in the other letter, so I will just pause to tell you the cider is with us, that I have forgotten the cost so please let me know, that I thank you much for your letters (25th came this morning), and to bid you Good-night. CRICK.

O.P., 10 A.M.
3.4.16.

DEAREST MUM

Thanks so much for yours of the 31st. It is misty this morning, so I am writing this till it clears up a bit. I am still living with 8th E. Surreys and spending my days in the Observing Station, lunching off sandwiches and a bottle of cider. Très Bon. Before the war I expect these woods were a favourite place for pic-nics. We have had real hot weather these last 3 days, and everything is coming out splendidly. As usual we are frightfully busy; at the moment we are constructing a new Observing Station, a new Battery position and various other things. Meanwhile this child sits here and does all the shooting. The Captain and Bowman are at the Battery. Carroll is at the Wagon Line, which is miles back, and Reginald Drake Boffin is on leave. Yes, the Surreys relieved the Manchesters here. I daresay Godlee knows Fullerton, the

Major we took over from. The Hun has been very quiet here for the last week, long may he remain so. The batteries get more attention than the Infantry really, and they are so thick that if the Bosche only goes on long enough he is bound to get something. The other morning he was having a sort of general poop about and got a direct hit on the side of one of our casemates, hitting 3 men (luckily not badly) and putting the gun out of action. Yesterday he put 120 6″ into the 60 pounders and only succeeded in blowing in the door of their cook house. Such is life. Would you tell Dad that I am telling Cox to send my pass book to him, in case they are charging me income tax or anything. Love to all from CRICK.

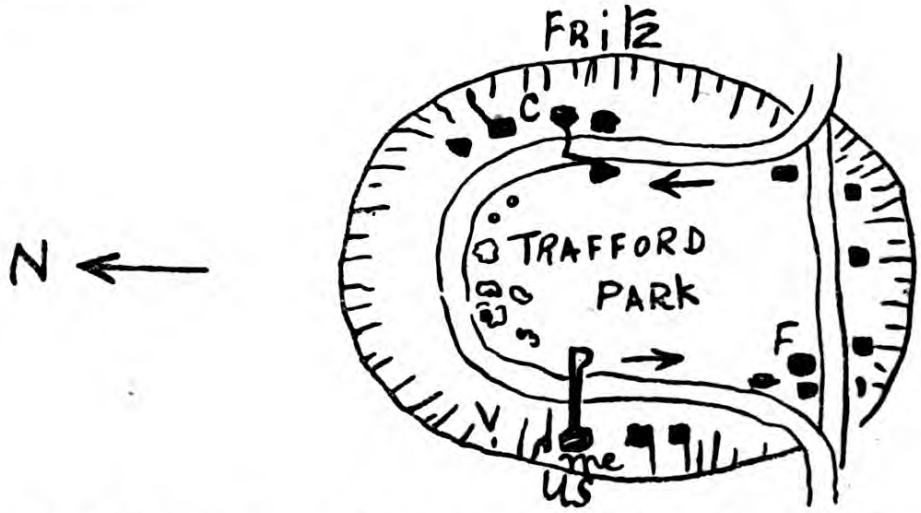
V—x Wood.
3.4.16.

MY DEAR MAURICE

Merci bien for your letter. I am writing this in a young trench in the hillside, which is at present serving as an observing station. It is a nuisance not being able to get a leave these holidays, but this show at Verdun was to blame, as we had to take over a lot of line up North, to relieve the French. However if you and Hump can get a week at home when I am over, it will be almost better. I have changed my mind about the French, I was judging them by the mouldy old terriers we originally relieved here. The French soldier when he is good, is very, very good—when he is bad—Ach!

This is absolutely the spot to be, in this war. You can do your bit, at least Gunners can, and at the same time enjoy

a Picardy spring. The plan of this place is something like as under.



It is like a great basin, with cliffs for rim, which the river flows into, right round, and out. We hold our bit of river and Fritz holds his, and we scout for each other in the park, and chivey each other among the trees to the N.
Love from C.

"Star" Dug-outs.
5.4.16.

DEAR MAURICE

As usual I forgot your birthday, so sorry. Please invest the enclosed in a goodly book or other token. Things here are very quiet, touch wood. I expect old bosche has something up his sleeve all right, as we have been worrying him a good bit lately. To-day being Thursday, I suppose you 3 lads are now enjoying the first night of the holidays, lucky young dogs. Well, I can't complain, as I am not doing badly here, but give me Weatherbury, every time. I have a sort of premonition that this holidays you will play golf, cricket, visit T. Grange and H. House and—and—

one minute, it's hovering round—Ah!—yes, go to the picture house. Let me know if things fall out as I have predicted. I suppose everything at home is much as usual. Ada a trifle more—er—pronounced. Scrap in a happy state of complete indifference to his surroundings, and a more amusing kitten than we have ever had. Francis probably wants taking in hand. Be *gentle* but *firm*, as Robo would say.
Yrs., C.

DEAR HUMP 7.4.16.

'Tis a Picardy Spring,
The bluebells and primroses show it,
(And also my fancy takes wing)
By violets and such you may know it.

There are thrushes and robins and tits,
Wrens, thrushes a few, also blackbirds,
And each unconcernedly sits
Expanding its little throat skywards.

But *I* should enjoy the spring more
Without all these shells and trench mortars,
Bombs, snipers, and Whizz-bangs galore
(That last couple jolly near caught us).

Yes *I* much prefer Wentworth Road
"Where there isn't No 'Uns to escape yer,"
I would sit there as slack as a Toad
Or play with the Claverings (Napier).

Enough of this cynical Slop,
I can see some fat Bosches in Frise,
This bilge-water burbling must stop
Whilst I snipe them with consummate ease.

I missed them (I usually do),
Unfortunate that the day is a misty 'un,
I must now have a shot at Curlu
So goodbye and good luck
from yrs. CHRISTIAN.

O.P.
9.4.16.

MY DARLING MUM

I am so sorry I have been such a rotten correspondent lately, but anyhow thanks very much for your letter of 5.4.16 which my faithful retainer Gr. F. Salmon has just brought up. The landscape is at present wrapped in a thick ground fog from mère Somme so business is slack. I can feel the holiday atmosphere even out here, and directly I woke up on Wednesday I knew Hump was going home that morning. What a lot of things have happened since this time last year, when one looks back. Would you send me out a pair of decent putties? Maurice could try 'em and see if they are all right. Love to all from C.

12.4.16.

DEAREST MUM

Thanks so much for all your letters, it is ripping to hear of the Easter Hols. going on as per usual. It has rained steadily all to-day, and observing is very dull. At the moment brother Bosche is pumping stuff into St. Gobain on the right. Everything is coming on tremendously here, bluebells everywhere, and the cover will soon be quite thick. But oh! to be in Arden, with a motor-bike, now that April's here. There seem to be more and more civilians in C—— every day. I counted 7 women, one old man, and 2 children there, at one moment, this morning. I think I

will write to M. Le Maire after the war, and get him to tell me their experiences. I saw the first paper for a fortnight yesterday, the Daily Mail. That Typhus show in the prison camp last year is bad reading, isn't it? Gimson the Surreys M.O., known throughout the division as Jimmy, is a great friend of Trilby Vidal's, in fact lived with him for 6 years. Of course all these strikes are beyond words. People have no conception of the depressing effect they have on the men here, or they might go to the length of putting in a fairly strong government. So the real attack on VERDUN is only just commencing, up to now, we have only seen a little skirmishing. "Wind up" is a remarkable expression which appeared from nowhere and is now universally used throughout B.E.F. "It fairly put the wind up me" for instance. Would signify, alarm, anxiety, terror etc. "Dud," primarily a non-detonated shell, means anything that doesn't come off. See our trench alphabet *re* Trench Mortars "T" is the thud as it drops in the mud
"U" the uncertainty—is it a dud?
Well, old dear, I think that's just about the lot at present. Much love to all from CRICK.

15.4.16., 10.45 P.M.

MY DEAR DAD

Many thanks for your letters. I am writing this in bed (*i.e.* my Valise) in the observing station. "Soldiery discovered asleep, noise of machine guns without." You will be pleased to hear we have just repulsed a patrol of 6 Germans. I am now about 10 feet below ground in a kind of gallery in the cliff, surrounded by 3 telephonists. "Ear that buzzin," observes Gr. Bellingham, "—Aeryplane ain't it, Alf?" "Couple of 'edge 'ogs aht side," sleepily rejoins Alf. We

have had a lot of wind these last few days which is bad for business, but a thunderstorm, accompanied by snow this morning has put a stop to it. The moon looks a bit sickly to-night though. I had a good day's shooting to-day, or rather more amusing than deadly. The Hun in F—— doesn't yet realize he is watched from here, and his misplaced caution when he is full in view is very funny. I saw all sorts to-day. Clean huns, dirty huns, some with white fatigue jackets, some with sweaters, some with overcoats, and one terrific lad with shiny boots, belt, resplendent tunic, and a red cap, *some* Uhlan. He will have a tale to tell O of his narrow escape this afternoon if he ever gets back to the fatherland. Yrs., CHRISTIAN.

15.4.16.

MY DARLING MUM

Just a bit line to let you know I am still on the bounce and so forth. Business here is quite good, and the weather improving a bit, after several stormy days. I sleep in the O.P. in our days, instead of battle dug-outs, as a hun has kindly consented to surrender who states that there is to be dirty work toward this very week. Consequently we are prepared. Did I tell you of our early days in the Tambour when munitions, especially bombs and grenades were few and far between. The hun shelled the Sector with exasperating energy for several days till the Surreys put up a notice. "If you will persist in this behaviour we shall be compelled to fire our rifle grenade." To which Fritz replied "Sorry" and thereupon desisted. Accuracy B (reported by Aeroplane) as those sparkling leaflets, the Divisional Intelligence Summaries, would put it. Assez, bon soir, chère ma mère, CHRÉTIEN.

V—— Wood.
16.4.16.

My dear Maurice

So many thanks for the joint letter, I had one of my periodical returns to Naish last night, only this time as an O.N. I arrived quite informally and started a bonfire in the changing room. I then went into the big schoolroom where the partitions were opened (I assisted) because Tommy was about to conduct somebody round and wished to enlarge upon the beauty of allowing small boys to mix with big ones. This amused me immensely as the direct result was the conflagration raging in the changing room. The somebody proceeded to deliver a lecture on Salonika. I sat at the desk I had at Miss Lotka's next to Granny Baker, who remarked with an apologetic little giggle "Rather disgusting, isn't it?" It was Granny to the life, giggle, voice and everything. Suddenly remembering the conflagration I prudently woke up, after a most enjoyable visit. I went to lunch with an old friend, one Nevill, yesterday, and ran across an O.R. Soames in H.C.B. but I am pretty sure you didn't know him though. A 5.9″ shell has just gurgled overhead, destination D/84 R.F.A. Bad cess to it. I enclose a key to the various towns which I can see from here, which you ought to be able to solve with the aid of a map. Yrs., C. C. C.

Doggerel Dodderings on VI. Sector.

Of all the towns of France
Are none more fair than ——— Vaux.
The summer woods entrance
And Mother ——s below. Hem.

Have you finished with the world
If from every urban whirl you
Turn with loathing then lie curled
'Neath the carrière at ——— Curlu.

If you want to take your ease
None more suitable than ——— Frise.

Are you blasé, bloated, bored?
Angry passions hard to stem?
Then when we've laid down the Sword
Go at once and visit ——— Hem.

If you're hard up, worn or sad,
If your spirit's faint and weary,
Then of course my simple lad
You must go and stay at ——— Clery.

And you'll like it more and more
When you go to ——— Maricourt.

Are your amours played upon,
Has your heart been badly bent in,
Try a journey to ——— Peronne.
Or better still to Mont St. ——— Quentin.

Are you tired of lust of gain,
Bills and bank notes, bonds and money,
You will find at Haut ——— Allaines.
That the outlook's always sunny.

If you're clever then perhaps
You will fill up all these gaps.

C. C. C.

O.P.
21.4.16,
Good Friday.

MY DARLING MUM

I am afraid it is nae sma' period since I wrote. A norrible calamity has befallen me. For some time I have been aware that Burglar Bill (sometimes known as Lt.-Col. D. G. Blois, D.S.O.) has had his felonious eye on me for Bde. Orderly Officer. The blow fell this morning, officially. It is rather rotten leaving my section and everything, but I suppose I shall learn something about running a Bde., and it will be a change. The weather here is inexpressibly beastly, and it is raining like world without end Amen. Much love from CHRISTIAN.

21.4.16.

MY DEAR DAD

Many thanks for your letter, enclosing my financial situation. If you think it would be a sound scheme to invest my year's takings in Exchequer Bonds or something, you might let me know. It is at present absolutely pouring with rain, a fact which has deluded 2 intrepid Uhlans into imagining that I couldn't see them if they went for a stroll from Gimble to Mimsev Woods. Not so, and they returned in haste on receipt of 2 rounds Shrapnel. Jimmy the Surreys' M.O. pulled out a 6 lb. pike on a trout caste, after 15 minutes of the best, last night. Duck are plentiful, there are a litter of cubs just behind the wood, and the cuckoo has arrived. A man returning through this wood from a patrol the other night

said he saw a wild boar, public opinion, however, is more inclined to the opinion that he had been "celebrating."

Yours,

C. C. C.

This nice secluded chatter
Away from noise and clatter.

23.4.16.

My dearest Mum

Be'old the Orderly Officer very much at your service. Do you wish ought of telephones, anything of "Intelligence," or something to ride, then come to me—and be told it isn't available. I am sleeping in the Marquis's dressing room and very nice too. Hand-painted ceilings and walls, approached by a passage hedged in with mirrors, and just outside the gates a wretched little hovel not as good as the noble marquis's cellar. But que voulez-vous ? j'ai un bel feu ce soir, ça marche. The Mess is in what was probably equivalent to the servants' hall, and has the advantage of being underground. I don't think I told you that a shell entered the marquis's bedroom, while he was in residence but not in his room, and burst with 'orrible vilence. The Gardens are notable for the shell holes and the peacocks and the lakes (replete with amusing but dangerous punts) which open on to Mother Somme. Altogether a pleasant enough spot. Love from

C. C. C.

25.4.16.

My darling Mum

This is to let you know that D.V., as things are at present, I shall roll in sometime on May 3. So don't let

M. and H. go back to school and so forth. Much love from CRICK.

The Baronical Seat.
26.4.16, 10 P.M.

MY DEAR DAD

As usual I am afraid I am heavily in debt as to letters. We have had glorious weather these last 2 days, real summer. I think I shall always remember yesterday, as a typical day in this stage of the war. In the morning the colonel and I sallied forth and walked 40 miles or more to a horrid little spot yclept the "Crow's Nest," which is about 3 yards from the hun, but as it is on the edge of a precipice it is reasonably safe. There we witnessed a wee shoot, short but sweet (if you are at the right end), 200 assorted rounds in 3 minutes. Some dust. 6 minutes later the enemy got his counter-hate off his chest. Bang, wallop. We then back trekked for not more than 25 miles and hove up at Battle Dugouts just in time for lunch and lime juice, after that we proceeded on our way refreshed. After a decent interval fate threw the Adj. (George Slade) and myself together in a punt on the lake. There we were presently hailed by old Carroll who had come up from the Wagon line for a look at the Battery. Carroll proceeded on his way, and about an hour later when we were hard at work (playing Slade's Gramophone), we got a message to say "16 5.9 shell between copses M and P (an unprejudiced observer would say on D Battery, but you see they haven't found our position yet (? ? ?)) and Mr. Carroll has been hit." Cheery. As a matter of fact Carroll had a most wonderful escape. The

shell hit a Sergeant, who died last night, poor chap, and Carroll was badly cut about the face and hands with gravel and small splinters, but his eyes were not touched. If I am lucky I shall turn up on the 3rd, but do not meet any trains, as boats etc. are so uncertain. I suppose M. and H. can be retained till the 13th when my leave, if any, touch wood, of course I don't suppose I shall, I mean it is only perhaps, and so forth,—expires. Phutt. Yours,

C. C. C.

30.4.16.

My dearest Mum

Careful investigation reveals the fact that I arrive in England on the 4th, starting from here on the 3rd. We are having glorious weather here, real pukha summer. My new job is Bde. Intelligence Officer, Bde. Signalling Officer, and Aide-de-camp to the Colonel. We usually go out for the morning to an O.P. or Wagon Line or something and get in about 3 P.M. Then I usually spend the rest of the day looking over Intelligence summaries and so forth. A pleasant life withal, and worthy to be enjoyed. Love from C. C. C.

Wire from Southampton 8.30 A.M. May 4, 1916. "Blowing in this afternoon. Herbert."

Second Leave.

20.5.16.

Christian arrived in the early afternoon of May the 4th, 1916. The boys had accepted an invitation to tea at the Kenricks' and they all went off there together. The time that followed was spent in the usual happy way, with the added enjoyment that in the longer, brighter days every one was able to be much more out of doors, and more time was

put in by the young crowd in chasing each other about in the different gardens. The only little bit we would have liked to arrange differently was, that Maurice had to go off to Rugby and Humphrey to "Naish" before Christian's leave was over. Humphrey left on the 10th and Maurice on the 11th. We went to see Maurice off by the 7 P.M. train; Basil Farncombe was being seen off by his Father and Mother by the same train. Maurice was head of the house or else we would have asked leave for him to stay till Christian left, but he had duties to fulfil and it was only right he should go. Crick missed them both. I was talking to Christian that evening after he was in bed about some trifling thing that I thought would worry M. in the House at Rugby and wishing I could alter it to eliminate what I thought might be a source of botheration. Christian, looking very benevolent and peaceful, said: "Yes, that is what you would always like to do for all of us." At the same time he told me I was harassing myself quite unnecessarily. He often had a look which can only be described as "benevolent"; Mrs. Napier Clavering had noticed the same look sometimes when he was even younger, perhaps having tea with Mark, Molly, Alan, and our boys in their school-room, a look which one connects as a rule with an older person who has got to a certain platform from which the younger ones are regarded. Christian enjoyed "looking on" and loved his fellow beings for all their characteristic ways. Their thoughts, sayings, and doings he got keen enjoyment from. It was anything but a censorious attitude, and when he has been thought introspective, I am sure his thoughts were often turned outwards and he was looking *out* at others and not inwards regarding himself. He did look at himself as well, and in almost the same detached way.

Even when quite small I liked to hear him remark on people's idiosyncrasies without any animus or condemnation. He was strong on the point of the evil of discussing people adversely, said how if that was once started in the Battery it would rather put an end to good fellowship.

He had suffered a good deal from indigestion through the winter, and I persuaded him after the boys had left to go and see Dr. Hart and get treated for it; this he did, and the stuff he was given *did* "scotch the fiend." Next day after Maurice had gone back to Rugby he went off with Francis to Harborne House, and there I found him, when I went up later, playing cricket with Barbara and Peter aged respectively 9 and 7. We walked round Harborne Hall that evening, it was a convalescent hospital, and C. remarked that it was good to think soldiers from the Ranks had such splendid surroundings to be in, that theirs was the hardest lot of any, not so much on account of the actual danger but they had so many hardships to endure of one kind and another. I was leaving to stay with Cicely at Broadstone the same day that Christian was going to France. He and his Father saw me off from New Street Station, and then they walked across to Snow Hill and Christian got the mid-day train to Paddington on May the 13th.

Leave.
High Street,
A——.
14.5.16.

DEAREST MUM

Behold me returned (only temporarily I fear) to the fold of D/84. I had an excellent journey really, got to

Paddington to the tick, bus'ed to Piccadilly, and then walked to Waterloo viâ Westminster. A good run to Southampton, and dinner on board, secured a berth, and had a good night. Got in about 3.30 and train started at 5. Disembarked at a likely looking station, while the train was mouching round the suburbs of A—— and found my horses, et me voici. 7 Officers including the colonel are on leave, which leaves things very short handed, D/84 especially, so the Burglar has decreed that I go and help them. There is a scheme on hand of taking all the D Batteries in the division and making them into the 85th Bde. In place of Howitzers which now form it. If I was Orderly Officer and this happened I should lose all chance of getting back to the battery. As I am rather luckily back with the battery at the moment, I think I shall stick out for remaining with them. The General and the Colonel both return on Friday and then we shall see what we shall see. We are undergoing a most strenuous course of training so I had better stop this now and get to work on it. Much love to Cicely and les enfants from

CRICK.

c/o 9 Squadron, R.F.C.
16.5.16.

MY DEAR DAD,

So sorry I haven't reported my safe arrival before, but things have gone with rather a rush. I had a really excellent journey and got in about 3 P.M. on Sunday. I found everybody fearfully short handed, as we have no fewer than 7 officers away on leave, so I am at present back with D/84 giving them a leg-out. I rather hope to be able to stay with them, as there is some chat about

the D Batteries of the Division going to form a new Brigade, and I don't want to be stranded as Orderly Officer, without a chance of getting back to my battery, which is after all my pukha job. At the moment I am staying with the flying corps in a neighbouring village. I and P. W. Sim, O.R. (B.B.D.) are attached for 3 days to study co-operation between Aircraft and Artillery. On our return we are to forward "the very fullest notes to Div. Arty. and be prepared to lecture." What, What! Love to all from CRICK.

Just been up in a plane for the first time. Some sensation. Rather fascinating but I shouldn't care to do it for a living. We went over and looked at old S——.

C. C. C.

20.5.16.

DEAREST MUM

Horrors! I do believe it is a week since I wrote. I really feel I have lived this week. Here it is in detail.

14.5.16. Arrived here about 5 P.M. The captain and Duff here. Griffin at Gun line digging a new position. As Duff goes on leave I return to battery, which is lucky as battery are shortly going to 85th Bde., and becoming C/85, so might have got stranded.

15.5.16. Spent a hectic morning trying to get hold of everything going on in the battery. In the afternoon am detailed for 3 day course with R. Flying Corps, to "keep a diary and forward with very fullest notes" on my return. Loud groans, but am somewhat reassured on finding that P. W. Sim, a fellow O.R. from 83rd Bde., is going too, and we can both get over in the Div. Arty. staff car. Am attached to A. flight, and find a fairly good billet. Sim

sleeps in same room. Flying corps appear to do themselves pretty well as regards messing.

16.5.16. Spent the morning and afternoon blowing about the Aerodrome picking up scraps of information. Went up for about 20 minutes in the evening on a B.E.2 C Biplane. Seems funny to do the 16 miles to the line in as many minutes. On the whole much prefer mother earth.

17.5.16. Morning as before. Went up for an hour and a half in the afternoon. Still more prefer mother earth.

18.5.16. Hastily summoned home as Captain has put his knee out, and no Officer at Battery. Get back here just in time to see Captain before he went to hospital.

19.5.16. Hectic day in command of Battery. Fortunately Carroll arrived in the evening to help things out a bit. Have exchanged about 40 notes with Captain during last 24 hours.

20.5.16. 8.30 A.M. to 3.30 P.M. did umpire (with 4 other unfortunates from Bde.) to one of Maxse's "Tactical Exercises." Am now so sleepy, in consequence, that I will close. Much love to Cicely and all (are you still there?) from

CRICK.

My indigestion is quite all right again now, which is très bung, n'est ce pas?

D/84.
23.5.16.

DEAREST MUM

Mille pardons a ce que j'ai oublié votre jour de naissance, je suis désolée de—er—de désolation et de er—tristesse, you catch my meaning. But many happy returns of the day, you receive this, for after all what's in a mere date? And now what would you like, a tiara of diamonds, a necklace of pearls, an emerald bracelet, a nice little 60 h.p. Rolls-Royce,

or just my very best love? You have only to say the word and any of these are yours for the asking. To-morrow I am off to the front in a motor lorry, to relieve old Boffin. My job will be digging this new position place, with an independent if not extensive command of 16 men. Mon capitaine vient de retourner hier d'hôpital, il a l'espère d'aller en permission ce jeudi prochain pour dix jours. Carroll rolled in (I must have told you) last Friday, his knee is still rather groggy but he seems otherwise fit. Bowman comes back from a course on the 26th and goes on leave on the 28th. It ought to be rather jolly up in the famous valley now; one gets a certain amount of enjoyment out of the "front," when not engaged in actual hostilities. You are in touch with everything and you don't have the responsibility for holding the wretched thing. You have no idea what a miserably inefficient looking obstacle the trenches appear from a plane. Deceptive, one has to be careful about these things. I underwent a super-inoculation on Sunday night, and have had a somewhat hectic 48 hours in consequence. However, I understand I am now theoretically immune from a number of terrifying diseases. From noon to-morrow you must adress (but with two "d's" if you like) us as C/85 (one—one—two). We are extremely sick at losing old Dudley Blois, our new boss is an idiotic old ass called Wilde (ass) and he has a perfect stunner of an Adj. Well, au revoir. Much love to all from CRICK.

Address is C/85 instead of D/84 now.

24.5.16.

GOOD MY BROTHER

How prospers it with you in the high position of authority to which it has pleased Heaven to call you? I feel sure I

ought to have written before, but still "tempus fugit, nux vomica," as Caesar said, you remember of course, on the historic occasion when he slipped up on the imperial banana skin, and Mark Antony hurried up with his cloak and spread it over the mess. I believe Gloriana was there but you know all about that. And of course you recollect that perfect bit "Omnia Galla est in tres partes devisa"—"You'll need all your gall to devise means to tree those parties," don't it? Talking about "gall," I laughed for about half an hour or less last night when I remembered "Kick-in."

Molly: "Mist—er Garvee—e. You ought to be a kind of—*friend* to uss," wow. Garv: ff: "Say, quit this sob stuff, and get down to cases!" Wow-wow.

I have had a perfectly hectic damn' week since I got back. Hareing about to Aeroplane courses, pushing the battery into C/85 instead of D/84, being inoculated, and so forth. And talking about inoculation I will tell you what happened to me. Run away, you boys, this isn't a joke, it's serious. Hewer (you don't know him, but I do) and Capt. Fraser, R.A.M.C. (you don't k h b I d), all walked round to the chamber of horrors together, Fraser expatiating on his marvellous syringe which apparently was a painless death, no eggs, no milk, no trouble kind of arrangement. When we reached the dungeon he explained that what we imagined to be the receptacle for boiling criminals in oil, was merely his sterilizer, which reached the temperature of 2000° C. thus discouraging the most optimistic of germs. He showed us how he put the painless syringe in for 5 minutes, at the end of which time the instrument had melted into a neat ball of metal, most ornamental on the watch chain, but hardly suitable for providing against half the diseases known. So he had to produce the thing about the size of a garden squirt,

which rather quelled our merriment, and continued to do so for the next 48 hours. Off to the front to-morrow. Sound of horses without. Bugles blow, growing fainter (or is it a motor lorry ?).

Curtain.

Copse E.
25.5.16.

My dear Dad

Many thanks for your letter. I believe Slade much appreciated the Cigars, so many thanks for sending them. Now I am at the front again, in charge of the delving of our latest position. It is going to be rather a good one (see last sentence) and is in front of a nice little copse officially designated "E." Up at the M—t end of the valley. I shall probably be here for a fortnight or so. It is the usual thing you know, flowers blooming, guns booming, nightingales singing, and shells shrieking. We started off from the back o' beyant in a motor lorry, at 8.30 yesterday morning, and de-bused at 12 midday Deposited kits at B—Y church and marched up, at least I rode. Got here in time for lunch, and found Griffin in great form. Unfortunately the criminal idiot responsible for bringing our kits up neglected to do so, and we had to rough it. A great comfort this "rough-it." It imparts a "Mustn't grumble at having to do this occasionally" sort of atmosphere. Griffin departed for the "Back" this morning, and our kits have just arrived 9 P.M., small comfort though for it is raining hard. What a life. I should like my coat with the goodly buttons of leather if you wouldn't mind dispatching same fairly shortly. Also cheap editions of

Chronicles of the Imp	Farnoll.
Money Moon	"
Whirligigs	O. Henry.
The 4 Million	
Heart of the West	
T. Tembaron	F. H. Burnett.

And also that book Maurice lent me and which I started, by R.L.S. and it is a continuation of New Arabian Nights.
Love from C.

By the way our address is now C/85 instead of D/84.

Copse E.
26.5.16.

My dear Humphrey

I trust you are well. Hearty congratulations on doing such a beef in the sports, unrehearsed too, wonderful. Our battery has been transformed to another Brigade, so instead of being D/84 we are now C/85. The reason for this is that in the old days, there were gun Brigades and Howitzer Brigades, but in action the How. Bdes. used to be split up and batteries attached to the gun Bdes., and the whole show called a "Group." This meant that the How. Bde. H. Qrs. had nothing to do and was quite unnecessary, so now a Field Artillery Bde. will consist of 3 gun Batteries and one How. Battery, and we have had to shift out to make room for the latter. Rather annoying as the change of Colonels is not by any means to our advantage. I am now fighting my country's battles once more, for although the battery is at "rest" behind A—S, we have to keep an officer and some dozen men up here to build a new Battery position. It is in the front of a little sort of spinney place, rectangular in

shape, consisting principally of dwarf oak, beech, and maple. Rather a nice spot in fine weather, but inclined to be sticky when it rains. We are about 2500 yards from the wily hun here so get a good view of the evil which he—er—(what the deuce *is* the singular of "Wrought"?)—well, does. I arrived the day before yesterday under the most depressing circumstances. It was pouring with rain, and before I had been here an hour, boom—woa—bang right over our heads at a Battery in rear. The silly ass of a Boche who was laying the gun forgot to see that the last motion of his ranging gear was one of depression and suddenly put 2 colossal 5.9 "crumps" 10 yards in front of the position, nearly frightened the life out of me. One feels frightfully cut off from everything here, for being isolated from the battery we are without telephones or transport, and as our neighbours belong to the 30th division they take no interest in us whatever, beyond trying (unsuccessfully) to pinch our stuff. My only link with the world is my groom who comes up at noon each day with a paper and sustenance to keep soul and body together.

27.5.16. I had to break off yesterday, to go into B—Y to draw material. Down the valley towards S—— avoiding shell holes and dud shells as far as possible, then to the right past the cemetery and up the hill road thro' the woods, over the moor and down the hill and so into poor old B. A hun plane is just coming over, not to drop bombs I trust. Judging by the number of machine guns pooping at him he must have been one of ours. Yes, there goes "Archie," he must have been asleep before. I am writing this in the sun on the West side of our Copse during the dinner hour. To my right is the row of trees which marks the P—— road. There are several new gaps since I was last here.

Well cheero, old nut, if you can't be good—be careful.
Yours, C. C. C.

Copse E.
28.5.16.

DEAR MAURICE

Thanks so much for your letters. I haven't had one for a long time. There is a nasty horrid battle going on outside, all sorts of stuff hurtling about. I don't know what can have happened, unless the hun got his ammunition allowance yesterday, or somebody has had a birthday or something. He'll get the opposite if he isn't a bit more careful. The worst of it is he has goaded the 30th Divn. batteries to fury and they fire right through us with deafening effect. The noise increases, another minute and I shall go and dig out my gas helmet. I will. I am absolutely trembling with fright. Steady my lad, remember you come from Birmingham. That's better. This is were, I mean where, we pause for dinner. First soup—gurgle, splash,—then Salmon, chased with a fork and a lump of bread—Steak, Heinz beans, mashed potato, mphm, tchah, mphm—Peaches from a goodly tin—plop, Slither. Yours,

C. C. CARVER.

Enclosed just received from Millar.

Copse E.
28.5.16.

MY DARLING MUM

Thanks so much for your letters. The last one was the line from the tea-rooms. I am a trifle uncertain of your whereabouts when this letter reaches you so will write home. I am now comfortably settled down to business in Copse E.

I live here with another Bloko called Rice who is engaged in a similar job for A/84. The said job being building a Battery position. We live very comfortably really, except that it is extremely hard to get provisions. B—Y is practically sold out of everything and that is our only hope. This beastly 30th Division have no idea of doing anything properly. We left them the beautiful baths at S—— and a jolly good canteen in B—Y where you could get anything. The first thing they did was to close the baths and now they have closed the Canteen. Will you ask Mrs. Godlee to write to the Staff Captain please? Tell him for any advice and information on these matters he can apply to Copse E. Things have been very quiet indeed since I came up on Wednesday, at least just round here. The principal distraction is the inevitable aerial scrap. How anyone can say we haven't got command of the air beats me. There are always at least 3 of our machines buzzing round, taking a stroll round the hun lines when they feel inclined. Yesterday for instance the wily fritz tried to do a 5.9″ shoot down the other end of the valley with plane observation, in the early morning when he thought no one would be about. Unfortunately both planes funked coming over because of our "Archies," and then 3 of our De Havillands came along on their way to do a patrol so they made off altogether. In the afternoon we did a shoot with 8″ and our plane stayed over the hun lines for over 2 solid hours under heavy machine gun and anti-aircraft fire. They fired over a *thousand* shells at him, and many, many thousand S.A.A. but didn't get him. But still as P. Billing would tell you the hun has the mastery of the air. Why I have adopted this querulous attitude towards the world, only my sub-astral personality can say. Much love from C. C. C.

Copse E.
2.6.16.

DEAREST MUM

Thanks so much for your 2 letters from Copse Hill. The world wags pretty uniformly here, nothing much of interest to record on the front near M—t. Except that yesterday was the Boche's busy day in the valley. He plumped in a fair amount over the way—and worse, for he, vandal and brute, did most suddenly and frightfully send up S——, I had to go into B—— to draw material for the Bde. dump, so called in at the Chateau. A great life this. Is there a bombardment anywhere, then shortly afterwards I appear, impartial and callous, and inspect the damage, and depart a little wiser. Can you see S—— lying sweltering under a June sun? (rhetorical). Regardez un moment, a frantically pedalling figure climbs the hill from the valley on a byke. A haversack is round his neck, bulging with bath towel, soap and sponge, for he intends to have a bath in Bray. Having reached the Calvaire at the Summit I pause, for should the hun repeat his stunt, it is a down hill pedal towards C——, and I could escape in haste. Down the hill past the church, which some enterprising Padre has be-pasted with very Anglicé church notices. I could ride better if my front wheel would confine its activities to revolving round the axle. I pause a moment before going down the hill to the river, West gate of Chateau, and right hand turn to Cappy, and assume the expression of smart young officer about to see the Town Major, in order to see the sights without molestation from the several exalted H.Q. which occupy the said Chateau. Down the hill, and turn to the left in at the gates, where a sentry, complete with box, is liable to be the first difficulty. I think I'll say

"Can you tell me——" Hullo, no sentry, no West gates. 1 shell hole, large. Needn't have taken so much trouble after all. And so round the chateau, which looks sadly decrepit, an effect which is completed by 2 dead horses. The Marquis' dressing room, however, remains intact. It was cast, as being too dangerous, shortly after I left; gurgles of joy. 2.30 so I must get on. A wobbly wheel, a dusty road, a hot sun overhead are partly responsible for a 5 minute halt at C—— corner. I usually wait here in hopes of seeing that collision between 3 Wagons and 2 Staff Cars, which always seems inevitable but which never comes off. B—— Population 5 to the square yard, Famous for dirt, dust, and overcrowding. The baths at last,—and I needed them. I met Sim there, he hopes to join R.F.C. in a fortnight. News of a lot of O.R.'s. We both comment with disfavour on the resemblance of the baths to the Rugby "toshes." Limited, *very* limited, but one supposes useful, at any rate so they prove. Did business and purchased the enclosed post cards. For explanation see backs. Much love from

C. C. C.

Copse E.
7.6.16.

DEAR MAURICE

Je vous remercie mille fois (French) for your line written just before Bodger Div. prep, or such I suppose it to be. Yes, my boy, I've been up in a plane (he observed pompously, as, placing his hands deep in his pockets, he strolled over to the fireplace and placing his feet at their maximum limit of elongation one from the other, he warmed his—that is to say he prepared to hold forth on his experiences). I had only been back 24 hours from leave when I was packed off

to No. 9 Squadron R.F.C. to stay there 3 days and study the question of co-operation between aircraft and Artillery. A "Wing" consists of a varying number of "Squadrons" of 3 "Flights," A, B, C. I was attached to A Flight. A Squadron is usually equipped with machines of the same type, and is commanded by a Major or Colonel, a Flight is commanded by a Captain. A Flight is roughly 6 pilots and 6 observers, and 4 machines though it used to be much less. 9 squadron are all B.F.2c planes. I expect you have seen a lot of them. On a fine day here you can usually see at least 4 up. They are extremely stable 2 seater Biplanes. Propeller in front 4 blades, 8 cylinder B.E. Engine. The Observer sits just behind the engine and immediately in the centre of the planes and the pilot is just behind him. The body of the machine extends right along to the tail. The pilot controls the rudder with his feet, and the planes with the "joy-stick." He has speedometer, Rev. Counter, Height Register, Map, Camera (with trigger and Sight) and compass. The machine mounts 2 Lewis guns. When in action the pilot would fire Right and Left, and the Observer would turn round and kneel up in his seat and fire back over the pilot's head. This plane has got wireless, which is simply a drum of wire which is let out in the air, and trails behind. Sending only, no method of receiving yet invented. All Artillery Observation is done from these planes. Suppose the Observer saw a hun battery firing and wanted to get on to it he would call up a battery (each has its own call) and say "so many guns firing at K 13 a 37, Stand by." By means of ground signals (strips of canvas) the battery would acknowledge message and tell him how soon they would be ready. Then he would simply send "fire" and correct their shots. B.E.'s are said to "fly themselves," *i.e.* if you let

go of everything they would go on flying all right for a comparatively long time. The Squadron have got one Bristol Scout. Fast tractor Biplane Single Seater, 2 blade propeller, powerful rotatory engine. Mounts a fixed Vickers gun, fired automatically through the propeller by the magneto. In order to bring fire to bear he manœuvres his whole machine, rather like a submarine with a torpedo. Some squadrons have F.E.'s, *i.e.* pretty powerful battle planes great wing stretch, propeller in rear, rudder only connected by stays, and some have De Havillands rather like an F.E. only smaller. They are single seaters, very fast and mobile and death on Fokkers. The first evening I was there I went up for a "joy-ride" of about ½ an hour. You get in *via* the left-hand plane, and stow yourself as securely as possible, fastening yourself in with the belt. Very much like being in a motor really. Then a mechanic starts the engine up, and the pilot runs her for one minute at normal speed, and then opens her up to maximum Revs. and we are ready. The skids are pulled away, a fellow hangs on to one wing to turn her away from the Aerodrome and we "taxi" away across the big open space in front of the Hangars. The pilot opens her out and after about 200 yards you feel her leave the ground and after a few minutes Mother Earth has sunk away to the proportions of a map. After 2 or 3 circles to get our height the pilot heads her for the line, the 16 miles to which we do in 10 minutes or so. It is frightfully interesting to see all the well-known country spread before one at once. It really comprises our whole fighting History. You can see where we detrained last July, the city looks like a black smudge at 4000 feet, all the places we have stayed at, all the places where we have been in action, all the trenches from A—t to the Somme. As we get

near the line the pilot shoves his left foot forward, gives a yank at the old joy-stick, and round we go on our beam ends. You cling on frantically and pray *hard* that the Earth will stop whirling round and round. Eventually it does, but I must say a steep bank is one of the more unpleasant sensations. We did a good deal of it as we dived down to land. The next day I went up with a fellow who was going to shoot a Battery. He had never done it before as a matter of fact, so we rehearsed it thoroughly on the "Ranging Machine" beforehand. And I did a 5 minutes' course on a Lewis Gun. Stop! stop a minute. This is getting too much for me altogether. Having been completely flattened out by the Naval Scrap, Verdun, Ypres, and a few other brain-cracking events, I have just heard that Kitchener, Robertson and staff have all gone down in the *Hampshire* on their way to Russia. Look here, I thought we were supposed to be *winning* this war. Well, we had a most thrilling flight but didn't do much good as couldn't see Ground Signals properly. But if you want a really interesting flight, go to the Western front. For over the line here the air is always thick with Aircraft and Archie and Sausage Balloons, and so forth. Yours, C. C. CARVER.

Copse E.
8.6.16.

DEAREST MUM

Some happenings lately aren't there? Before you have time to get your breath after one thrill, along comes another and lays you out. As regards Kitchener, *we* at least can say "Si monumentum requiris, circumspice." Here, and all along the line are the armies which bear his name.

To-day has been one of those depressingly war-sodden days, which bring the seamy side of everything home to one. A steady downpour of rain, punctuated by the wily 5.9″ crumpet, and a tour of inspection by a very obviously worried and depressed Colonel, and a particularly beastly casualty just behind the Copse. Well, it is just as well to get all the depressing things over at once I suppose, probably to-morrow will be a fine and hot June day. Dozens of buzzing planes in the sky, "Archie" bursting cheerily around, and all the little birds singing in our Copse. This naval Scrap has evidently discommoded the posts a bit as it is some days since we had a mail. Tons of love from

CHRISTIANO.

P.S.—Yours of the 30th just arrived ! ! We are getting on. I acknowledged both parcels as a matter of fact, one by letter (I got it at A——) and the other one which I got up here, by a field post card. I am glad to say the medicine has not been needed. To-day has been comparatively fine and a visit *aux tranchées* has made me correspondingly muddy. "One-one two." A meaningless expression, ranking with "Have a banana," etc. Origin, the drill book where everything is done smartly by numbers.

C. C. C.

Copse E.
14.6.16.

DEAREST MUM

Just a scrawl in absolutely frantic haste. The battery came in to the Copse on the night of the 11th and we are and have been so full up with work we can hardly breathe. Bitter irony, after getting nothing for about a fortnight, we

received a perfect orgy of mail yesterday. I got your letters of May 31st, June 9, 8, 5, 2, 1, 7, and Dad's of the 6th. Also 3 parcels, one with Coat, one with Mags., one with "Confectionery," also *Blackwoods*, the *Illustrated*, *Punch*, and *Daily Graphics*. The weather here is and has been perfectly appalling. Absolutely miserable. Rain, rain, rain, day after day. The Valley is in a shocking state. The hun tried a "Winkle" last night, and we got a fair amount of Lachrymatory stuff over. Great doings are toward, more than that one cannot say. But keep your eye on yours truly. The Capt. is still in England (He's been away nearly 3 weeks) and may be delayed some time. Thanks awfully for all the Mails, you will have to excuse my being a very poor correspondent for some time now, I am afraid. Please ask Francis to forgive me forgetting his birthday. Here's luck to him, and many happy returns. My love to Dad and all, from CRICK.

15.6.16.

DEAR MAURICE

Let me see, when was it you last wrote? You can think yourself lucky to get this, as we are so busy we have no time for eating or sleeping as it is. The Russians are doing splendidly, but we wish they could have waited a bit longer. One hears that it all started as a trench raid by Russes, who found the peaceful Austrian demoralized and shoved thro'. Then old Hindenburg tried a counter offensive up North where the real show was to have been, and at the date of going to press is up against it. And that's why we—but Hist! I wish I was a clergyman or a railway porter or something. You can have my motor-bike, and—er

—my driver and the lofting iron,—and that seems to be all. What a life. Can't you see me in a steel helmet, waders, rifle, bandolier, dagger and club, feverishly repelling counter-attacks. As a matter of fact I shall probably be discovered hiding under a trench grating. Don't say anything about this to hame, as they have no inkling of the horrid truth (I don't mean the t-grating part). Pushons nous, que nous push. Yours, C. C. CARVER.

17?6.16.
Saturday.

MY DEAR DAD

Herewith a rapid vapid scrawl. The filthy weather has at last broken, and we are once more dry and cheerful, and ready for what the season may bring forth. And it would seem to be not a little. A gorgeous sunset just now, deep crimson, and the P—— road standing out against a band of gold. Down South the 75's are a-spout. We are up to our Shrapnel helmets in work, which the absence of Budden accentuates. Received parcel containing *Money Moon* and Mum's letter enclosing Kelly's card for which many thanks, also many others. I can hardly say there is no news, but it is 11 P.M. and I am on the 6 o'clock touch (Summer time at last), so love from CHRISTIAN.

20.6.16.

DEAREST MUM

So many thanks for all your letters. The one with enclosure from Johann came ce soir. Who should stroll

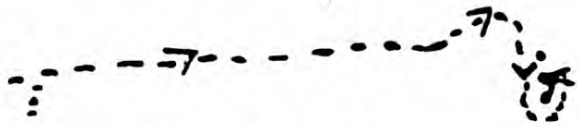
into the Copse to-day but Richard Barrett Talbot Kelly, none other. Looks flourishing, his battery is about 500 yards away. We are still working like niggers (and looking like scarecrows) and I have been getting in at 1 and 2 A.M. these last mornings. We have heard definitely that the Capt. is not coming back for a month, which is pretty exasperating for him. Till then, Griffin is in command, bless his dear little heart and imposing figure. I am feeling frightfully fit and full of life. The valley is enough to brace anyone up. Living in it, sleeping under it, putting a little more in sandbags daily, one finds it hard to realize that it is a sight unprecedented absolutely, and such a collection of power as the world has never seen. We shall all of us have *lived* this summer, or as much of it as may be. The hun is going on the rocks, I think. Verdun, Ypres, & such are all very well as sword and spear, but we are watching shield and breastplate. And we hope there are Joints. The game of aerial Tom Tiddler's ground is fast and furious these days. We usually open it with about 6 planes over the hun lines, until "brother B." gets exasperated and sends up a pair of "Two tails" battle super-planes, who will not, however, face the "music" of "Archie" or those little wheeling black specks at about 10,000 feet. Sorry I must be so repressive with news, but one can't say much, so better nothing at all, which cannot be misunderstood. Much love from CRICK.

26.6.16.

DEAREST MUM

Just a scrawl between Strafe's. Thanks so much for your letter, enclosing Hump's on bowling, suggested

diagram of H's slight leg break ball, which pitches just outside off stump and then *comes in!*



No time for writing I fear, when we are not fighting we are sending in returns. Love from CHRISTIAN.

29.6.16.

DEAR MAURICE

You will have gathered from your daily paper that things are doing all along the W. front, not that you ever read the paper, bless yer. We ain't arf into it neither. Proper show it is. The old hun has got his tail down badly for which I don't blame him. He has been coming over and "Kamarad-ing" pretty freely. There is still a certain amount of life in his Artillery which is rather annoying, but we have made him show his hand, which he wouldn't do if he held his fire altogether. We appear to have struck a physological (?) moment at last, and one hopes there isn't much behind him. Poor old bosch, a good many old scores are going to be paid off against him pretty soon. Well, good luck to me. I hope I get through all right, right Oh, good luck, old dear. Yours, C. C. C.

29.6.16.

DEAREST MUM

Thanks so much for the daily log. Dear old Harborne don't arf wish I were there. As it is I am doing Liaison officer with the Queen's, for the present. Duties, to keep

everybody informed about everything. Things are very warlike in these parts, and there are a fair amount of shells flying round. However great blows are being struck for Old England, and as long as they go home, nothing else matters, although a continual state of death and mud around one is apt to be depressing. That is nothing, however, to what the private soldier goes through without a grumble, and I have come to the conclusion that he is the most wonderful man I have ever met. He wades miles through mud, eats it, sleeps in it on the fire step, sees people to left and right of him blown to pieces, and *yet* he never murmurs. Very very much love to you dearest old Mum, likewise to Dad, Francis, and Ada. From CRICK.

Copse E.
2♑.6.16.

MY DEAR DAD

We're off, so wish us luck. "Our far flung battle line" is thundering and so forth. The Old Ger gave us pretty fair hell on the nights of 20th and 21st. Got 3 men the 1st time, and did some damage the 2nd. He is getting it back all right now though.

2♑.6.16.—Still "pooping" hard. Love to all from
CHRISTIAN.

11.40 P.M.
2.7.16.

DEAREST MUM

Well, we have made our little bit of History, I think. After 7 days' solid shooting we kicked off yesterday, and got our objective, *i.e.* the W. end of M—n village. Philip Godlee's division on our right, and the French (fresh from

Verdun) right of them. P. G.'s crowd were wonderfully good, and lucky too for they met very little resistance and got into the village without a hitch. Our lot met a good bit, but got there all right. The Surrey's (I was doing LIAISON for them, in a dug-out just behind front trench) were badly cut up, and did miraculously to get there. Out of their 20 officers only 4 got through unscathed, pretty rotten. I was at the battery for first 2 days of shooting, then went down to Infantry at Bn. H.Q. Rather mouldy, as infantry were getting a pretty fair doing. Moved up to the trenches on the afternoon of the 30th, and yesterday morning after an intense bombardment the infantry pushed. Not knowing quite *what* to shell, the hun temporized by shelling this dug-out all day. I have never thirsted for anyone's blood as I did that little 4.2″. Spent a busy day in this dug-out, linking up infantry with artillery thro' my 'phones. To-day the 4.2″ has evidently given us up, and have explored the captured front and support trenches. More later. Love from CHRISTIAN.

Written on a German "Feldpostkarte."

2nd July.

DEAR HUMP

Just a line to let you know I got through yesterday's big push all right, and hope to remain so. I picked this card up in the Boche 2nd line, which I have just been over to have a look at. Rather a horrid spectacle. The Boche dead are mostly in the trench and ours are outside. We got a lot of prisoners yesterday which was a goodly spectacle. How on earth the infantry did it I don't know. Absolutely wonderful show from beginning to end. My best respects to all at Naish. From CHRISTIAN.

To his Father on a German "Feldpostkarte."

2nd July.

Just a line from the battle field, on a card I picked up in the Boche support line in front of M—n. *Some* battle yesterday, one of the world's greatest I suppose, and the old division has proved its worth. I have lost a good many good friends though. From what one can see the Boche died fighting, and he appears to have manned his parapet, fairly strongly. A lot of prisoners came through here (our front line) yesterday, and the wily 4.2″ was fairly busy on this dug-out. My job in the bataille has been LIAISON officer between Inf. and R.A. So I have heard exactly what has happened all through. Jolly interesting. Love from

CHRISTIAN.

Copse E.
5.7.16.

DEAREST MUM

Have at last finished the LIAISON, and am back at the Copse. Things are going well on our bit of front, and the French are doing jolly well down South. P. Godlee's DIV. and ours were the only ones to gain their objective on the first day, not bad for Kitchener's Army. F—t and La B—— proved pretty tough nuts as one always knew they would. I wonder whether Uncle Willie's crowd did anything. Did I tell you we have really lost Budden. Our new C.O. is a man called Wager, used to be Adjutant of 82nd Bde. His father was one of the Senior Warrant Officers in the regiment and now has a commission. Wager was a gunnery instructor at the shop before the war and got his commission immediately after it broke out, and

stayed on as instructor for about a month while I was there. He lives at Weedon. He is a very nice fellow, and will make a good B.C. We are very sorry about Budden though. I enclose my "report" which Dad may care to put with the records. I tossed Griffin for the original, and lost. Much love to all from CRICK.

To —— G.O.C.
55th Infantry Brigade.

SIR

I have the honour to bring to your notice the exceedingly valuable assistance given to the Battalion in the attack on Montauban by 2nd Lieuts. Griffin and Carver, who acted as F.O.O. and Liaison Officer respectively. The information sent by Lieut. Griffin, and the excellent liaison with the Artillery by 2nd Lieut. Carver, was of the greatest assistance to me. In particular, the information sent by Lieut. Griffin that the enemy were placing machine guns in the mill and the promptness with which 2nd Lieut. Carver dealt with this, by turning the guns on to that spot, saved many casualties, not only to this Battalion, but all battalions of the Brigade. I am sending a copy of this letter to O.C. Right Group R.A. I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,
(Signed) A. P. B. IRWIN, Comdg. 8 (Ser.) Bn.
East Surrey Regt.

3rd July, 1916.

O.C. C/85 Bde. R.F.A.

I have the greatest pleasure in forwarding you a copy of above letter. Please convey my congratulations to these

officers and to the whole Battery for the good work performed on July 1st. 4.7.16.

(Signed) D. G. Blois,
Lt. Col. R.F.A.
Comdg. Right Group R.A.

Oxford Copse.
7.7.16.

My dear Dad

Very many thanks for the letters and good wishes. I shall never forget my 19th birthday, but I hope the future ones will be spent a shade more tranquilly, and pleasantly. As you know the "push" was on July 1st, and our bit of it was to take the Village of M—n, "which we done." The show was preceded by 7 days' bombardment, 7 days of inconceivable, unique hades. Our part in this was simple,—to keep on firing all day and night. I was at the battery for the first 2 days, and had a very soft time, as the hun hardly put anything back. Standing on top of the mess you could see a great wall of smoke running out of sight to the South —the French. Meantime the East Surreys were getting a bad doing; they were holding the Bde. front, and were also to be the right assaulting battalion. It is difficult to realize how much *is* put back. Also our heavies are bound to have accidents, and trench mortars have a habit of dropping in the wrong front trench. In fact, as Gimson (M.O. E.S.R.) said, "there absolutely can't be any hell worse than this." So on the third day yours truly set forth with his umbrella and carpet bag, to try and comfort the poor old Surreys a bit. There I spent the remaining 5 days, not very cheerful ones, for waiting, while death stalks broadcast, is apt to try every one. At last, on the night of the 30th we moved up into

position. A word of explanation about my position in the "Strafe." Each assaulting Bn. has 2 Gunner Officers working with it. A F.O.O. and a LIAISON Officer. The former helps the Artillery by his personal observations, the latter (me) by reports from the Infantry Bn. H.Q. So I installed myself in jolly hefty little dug-out just behind the front line, where I was connected by phone to Bn. H.Q. just across the trench, also to the Infantry Bde. and to Griffin in his O.P. in rear, where he had a topping view of the whole show. The night was quiet, except for a 4.2″ Howitzer which was playing all over the assembly trenches. Pearce and Nevill (2 company commanders we know rather well) came in just before dawn, both absolutely radiant, and declaring everything for the best. We (Major Irwin, the C.O.), Clair, the Adj. and I managed to get a good cup of tea at 5.30 A.M., plentifully diluted with rum, after which we felt fit to go right thro' and shake hands with the Russians. Got to battle stations, and the final intense bombardment started. The noise was terrific, but one feels the pressure on the ear drums more. Needless to say our wires were cut pretty shortly, and my 3 'phonists had to go out and mend it under pretty brisk fire, 2 of them were buried, but all 3 got back safely, wiro reperendo. Zero hour at last, one just heard a wild cheer above the continuous roar, to tell one that the 8th E. Surrey were on their way to get their own back at last. Then a series of reports from Griffin and the Infantry, which I passed on to the most useful centres. Germans holding out here, a machine-gun there, prisoners surrendering all over the shop. The Surreys got through to the end of the hun 1st defence system and stopped for a breather. The Division on our right, the County Palatine's, were jolly good, and absolutely poured

right through. I withdraw any remarks about them I have ever made. The Surreys won through to the village after a frightfully violent scrap. Out of the battalion we knew so well only 200 and 4 officers got thro'. Nevill and Pearce both killed, Soames (O.R. H.C.B.) and a good many others. The rest of the day was spent in consolidation of the village and ridge, and a beastly little 4.2″ did his best to disperse our dug-out. We made good all right, and I got over into the Hun lines on the 2nd. Topping weather all this time. 3rd I spent in the same way, and got back to the Copse on the evening of the 4th. Spent the 5th in the Copse, and moved forward to this position in the evening. On the 6th Wager and I did an observation Reconnaissance from advanced line, and then spent 24 hours there as F.O.O., which brings me to here, 5.50 P.M., at the battery. I saw the Corps on our left attack C—n this morning. A marvellous sight, owing to the configuration of the bosche salient they were attacking across our front. First of all a terrific bombardment and then I saw the waves of little figures washing over the bosche trenches. They were getting hell from the hun big stuff too. However they got the remains of the village. M—z wood is the difficulty now. Much love to Francis, Ada and all from

CHRISTIAN.

7.7.16.

DEAREST MUM

Thank you *very much indeed*, for all the birthday wishes and good cheer, which were most timely. We shan't forget my 19th birthday in a hurry, what say? *Some* Tag. I am written to blazes, but much love anyhow from CRICK.

Bois des T—s.
11.7.16.

DEAREST MUM

I am a felon of the deepest dye to leave you letterless so long, not that there is likely to be anything thrilling to recount, now that I have written. As you know the battery moved forward into Oxford Copse on the evening of the 5th, the 6th I spent in the advanced trenches, and the 7th passed uneventfully at the battery. On the 8th we got orders to move out that night to rest. Any lingering reluctance which may have remained at leaving the scene of conflict, was entirely dispersed by a timely gas shell which landed 10 yards from the Mess dug-out, making everything uninhabitable and uneatable, and severely wounding the Mess cook. Recipe for feeling of gladness on departure.—A pouring wet day, thick atmosphere of tear gas, slipping up and down a muddy hill side in a box respirator, attending an expiring man. One might have been upset before "the Somme," but now such things appear quite minor details. We trekked out at about midnight and pulled in here at 5 A.M. on the 9th, a distance of 7 miles! There was *some* traffic. Everything here is very quiet and peaceful, and we are enjoying a thoroughly restful time. Bowman and I went into C—e[1] to lay in stores for the mess, and there I purchased a "souvenir" for our young friend Francis. I haven't the least idea what our movements will be, and at the moment I don't particularly care. Thanks so much for all your letters. I got yours of the 7th to-day. Heaps of love from

CHRISTIAN.

[1] Corbie.

12.7.16.

DEAR GODMOTHER LOUIE

Bless your kind heart for the birthday "grub." It greeted me on my return to the battery on the evening of July 4th after the great battle of the 1st and 2nd. It was soon converted into a happy memory, no more. Rather a hectic birthday perhaps, but what enjoyment there was to be extracted was much enhanced by the parcel which has always reported itself on July 5th for the last 18 years. Long may it continue to do so, the sender remaining in all health, wealth, and happiness the while, so says Yrs.,

C. C. CARVER, 2nd Lt. R.F.A.

Bois des Tailles.
12.7.16.

DEAREST AUNT FANNY

Thank you so very much for your letter and "Iron Ration," which, unlike the pukha iron ration, will *not* be consumed only on authority from the W.O. We are having a very peaceful and enjoyable time at present, which we just about needed after the last few weeks of assorted noises and stinks, which is all war is in our days. The Country hereabouts is very like Wiltshire, except that the river is rather out of keeping. I was so sorry to hear Uncle Hubert had been ill. I hope poor old Charlie[1] has heard about our show here. I bet he has for the hun is a bad loser and shows it. Your most affectionate nephew, CHRISTIAN.

12.7.16.

DEAREST MUM

Thanks so much for your letter of the 8th. I am getting

[1] Charlie was a prisoner in Germany.

jolly annoyed at my letter of the 2nd taking such a long time to reach, as I am sure you are anxious. I suspect the 84th Bde. office of being the culprits. Life is flowing very quietly and smoothly. The country round here is looking absolutely lovely. I am so sleepy, so goodnight, Mamma. From CRICK.

15.7.16.

MY DEAR DAD

Many thanks for your letter of the 9th. I am so glad you were pleased with the little report, it was awfully good of Irwin to send it in. We are still at rest here, and the horses look better every day. A battle like this comes very hard on the poor old "skins" as they are kept going day and night bringing up ammunition. I hope lots of grazing and not too much work will soon see them right though. Yesterday was the 16th decisive battle of the world, according to Sir Douglas Haig. From all we can hear (we have had nothing official yet, but went up to the line yesterday to see for ourselves), it appears to have been a sweeping success. We get L—l, B—n le P—, B—n le G—— and woods, in fact all that slice of 2nd line which runs E. and W. Also cavalry and horse Artillery, got through, 1st time since Le Cateau. Taking it all round things are looking remarkably unhealthy for the boche. The country round here is simply topping, there is a flying ground about 500 yards away. The other night Wager and I walked over to the flying ground to look at a Frenchman who had landed. Another bird materialized out of the blue, and made a perfect landing. One felt mildly interested to see that the pilot was Streatfield mi. who one said goodbye to on

July 28th 1914. He came and shook hands, said he knew I was down this way. Funny how people do blow in. Lovely weather here, unfortunately not very clear. Love from CHRISTIAN.

15.7.16.

DEAREST MUM

We still rest, bien content. I rode over to the old position at M—e yesterday. Frightfully overgrown of course, but otherwise intact. Incidentally we rode over to the old O.P. and got a view of F—t, C—n and the 16th decisive battle of the world. Battles, as viewed from a distance, are somewhat alike—a large wall of smoke and bangs of varying intensities. But 'twas a famous victory. Saw Geoffrey Streatfield for a minute or two the other night. Ee drive zee plane. I have visited C—e again, otherwise not much to tell, beyond what you read in the papers. I am glad to see the Surreys have got a little recognition. Poor Nevill was the Captain who instituted the football stunt. He and Bobby Soames, an O.R. of my time, were killed side by side.

Thanks most awfully for all your letters, and please thank Aunt Fanny very much for hers, "letter follows at earliest opportunity." Much love from CRICK.

I enclose a P.C. of the Mill, of which you have heard tell.

P.S.—Just received (11 A.M.) a splendid mail. Yrs. of 11th, one from Hump, and one from Ada. Please thank Ada and Francis very much for their letters.

There is one really bad bit of news, which you will be as

sorry to hear as we are. Colonel Blois was very seriously wounded beyond Montauban yesterday, and died last night. It is absolutely *rotten*.

A Clover field,
Horses grazing circumadjacent.
16.7.16.

My dear Ada

Very many thanks for your letter. The parcel of cakes arrived safely. They are now but a happy memory, we had them for tea yesterday—trés bon. We are having a sort of glorified picnic here. 2 capacious tents provide sleeping accommodation for we 5 horficers, and the mess is "en plein air," as long as it keeps fine. In fact this is a thoroughly delightful spot, and you would not think that barely a fortnight ago it was well within range of the hun, in fact it was occasionally shelled. Great doings on again last night, the bombardment fairly shook the place. I believe the Corps on our left were to go Hurrooshing across from W. to E. across our front, taking Martinpuich and all sorts of wonderful things. If it wasn't for the death of the colonel we should be thoroughly elated. Our reasons for being here are probably rather obscure to the uninitiated. As you know there was a readjustment of Bdes. lately. The 3 Howitzer batteries of 85th Bde. were sent to 82, 3, 4 Bdes. and the 3 18 pdr. batteries displaced became the new 85th Bde., which, however, remained split up and Batteries were attached to their *old* Bdes.; which formed the Right, Centre, and Left groups for the PUSH. After the push, when fresh divisions came up to take over and push on, their fresh Divisional Artilleries became Rt. Centres and Lt. Groups and our Batteries came under their command. But there was no room for the

already attached 85th, so they were withdrawn and formed up here, to act as Mobile reserve. It sounds very fine, but it means that we are an official pawn shop. When a gun in action gets out of order, the battery takes it down to the Ordnance Workshops, and picks up one of our guns on the way back. Then we draw the mended gun when ready in place of it. *Very* lucid and instructive, besides being illegible. For general information and necessary action please. Would you ask Dad to enclose a cricket ball in the next parcel? We are reduced to a polo ball at present. Love from

CHRISTIAN.

In a field by the
Aerodrome.
Sunday, 10.40 A.M.
16.7.16.

DEAR FRANCIS

Many thanks for all your letters, for the which I crave forgiveness not to have answered. We have, however, been fairly busy lately. We are living next door to a "buzz-house" at present, where dwell 18 B.E.2c Biplanes, bikedral, tractor, in *the* language of the period G.S. Buses. They have lost 2 machines in the last week. One was a common or garden "crash" due to a bad landing, the other to a more or less direct hit from "Archie" at 600 ft. The pilot was very severely hit, but got his machine down all right, about 500 yards in our lines. We saw a fellow come in last night with one stay shot away, several bullets through the engine and wings. He had got a bit bored with just flying about looking for Fokkers, so came down to about 200 feet above the hun trenches, and when they opened a machine gun on him, he emptied both his Lewis guns at them.

Having nothing else to do he came home! Personally I nearly died of fright when the pilot put the plane on her beam ends. Yrs., C. C. C.

19.7.16.

DEAREST MUM AND ALL

At 2 A.M. last Sunday our absurdly delightful week in the Bois des T—— came to an abrupt finish, with an order to come into action at once and about 2½ yds. from the hun front line. We moved out in the rain, and got up near the line at about 10 A.M. The position was in the open and had never been occupied, the only cover being a 3 ft. deep trench. We got on to the place without mishap, but just as everybody, every officer, man, horse, and vehicle in the battery were on the position, the hun, who had been vacuously shelling round about, suddenly put a salvo of 4 right into us. We will draw a veil over the next half-hour. Suffice it to say that Capt. Wager was very severely wounded, and died in the dressing station, Bowman got a badly broken leg, Griffin a wound in the fleshy part of the leg, 8 gunners and drivers were hit, but only one killed, and we lost 15 horses. I was standing alongside one of the horses, the man on the horse was killed, the man just behind me was hit, and poor Wager was a few yards away. I got Wager into the trench and did what I could. Carroll took charge of the situation like the absolute hero he is. After about ½ an hour I got back and collected the teams, and about 2 hours later Carroll and the rest of the men got back.

3 hours later we came into action again in the same place!

We spent the evening digging ourselves in a bit and we

fired during the night. Got a little sleep between 4 A.M. and 7 A.M. when the hun let up a bit. He shelled us pretty hard all the morning, and midday a fellow called Patterson arrived to take command. I worked my way back to Bde. H.Q. in the afternoon, and reached the Battery through a frantic barrage at about 6 P.M.; ½ an hour later I returned to take charge of the Wagon line. The hun shelled all the way. I felt an absolute swine leaving Carroll on the position. I shall never forgive myself really. But orders is orders, and I *was* pretty well "blithero" by that time. I have spent to-day looking after our poor old horses.

Only 2 days since we left the bois, it seems like years. Don't worry about me, dearest old Mum and all, things are improving, and this child will get through all right. I doesn't need to fear much after this. Well, heaps of love to all from CRICK.

P.S.—Got a word with Kelly on the road, the 2nd time we came into action. He is advanced, but we are—er—more so.

4000 Miles behind the Line.
24.7.16.

VERY DEAREST MUM

We are now in Arcadia, where we arrived at 5.30 P.M. yesterday.

I fear my last letter was pretty depressing, but we were all feeling pretty rotten. After I wrote I am thankful to say we only had one more night and day in that hellish spot. If you remember we first came into action on the morning of Monday 17th when poor Wager, Griffin, Bowman and 7 men got scuppered. Then Carroll and I, principally Carroll,

brought the Battery in again in the evening. During the night we fired off a certain amount, and then got the tail end of the gas on L—e; we were about a mile South of it. The next morning Patterson, our present B.C., turned up. I went down to the Wagon Line to see about ammunition, etc., and while I was on my way the hun attacked L—e. Did my business, and started back with a nice fellow called Campbell. We rode along the P—— road and into M—t. We met a tremendous stream of wounded Highlanders coming down from L—e and D—e wood, and when in M—t a lot of loose horses, wildly galloping ammunition wagons. We decided to walk. We shall never forget M—t and the Briqueterie road. In the village itself our guns make so much row that you don't hear the hun shell coming—and they come fairly frequently. The Briqueterie road leads out across the waste of shell-ploughed wilderness a straight road, strewn on either side with horses and mules, lying as they died. Wagons and watercarts too adorn this pleasant highway, the last road that so very many Englishmen have trod. It is nothing really to what it might be, nothing to the unspeakable hell the hun is having and has had.

Campbell and I struck a French trench of sorts, and ran like anything through the bosche barrage, and arrived at the position to find them being shelled pretty briskly. I imparted what information I had gleaned, to Patterson at the bottom of the trench, and then he said he wanted me to go back and take charge of the Wagon line and get a good night's sleep. Accordingly back I went, and the hun shelled merrily all the way. Wednesday I spent in gathering material to put between us and the hun. In the evening I wrote to you and posted, and shortly after I heard rumours

that we were being withdrawn. Confirmed. Carroll and his section arrived about 6 A.M. We had been very heavily shelled during the night, part of another attack on L—e. A trench was blown in burying 12 men ; 2 were dead when dug out, the rest badly shaken. I was pretty glad to see my dear old Carroll safe and well, I can tell you. The worst of it was that 3 men of our battery and 2 men of the battery next door, who were digging them out, got knocked out by shrapnel. One of them was absolutely the best man I have got. Patterson and Mews, the latter joined us on Wednesday, from B/85, arrived with the rest of the battery on Thursday evening. We moved down to the Bois des T—— on Friday. Spent the night there under canvas. On Saturday we said a long farewell to the Picardy we have known and fought in for just one year. For the last time we trekked down the long upland road into Corbie. That great road where the traffic is day and night at least equal to Regent Street. A long day's trek, unpunctuated by lunch, did not seem good to the Junior Section Commander, who, in his capacity of Mess Secretary vice Lt. Griffin (wounded), found it necessary to proceed ahead with the Cook's Cart, to purchase stores for the said Mess. Omelette, du thé, et des petits gâteaux formed part of my programme. Très bon. I wandered round the town and into the Cathedral, where did I ask that the soul of Captain A. H. Wager, our very gallant gentle knight, be received into God's eternal peace. Likewise all the other 20 or so good fellows who came up this same road a year or so ago, and have not gone down—with us. Not all killed though, thank God.

We bivyacked [sic] for the night by the side of a lake, the officers' sleeping apartment being in a nice corn-field. Carroll and I had a confab, on our year's doings, we have

had some jolly good times, and except lately have been extraordinarily lucky. But if Patterson and Mews were not the jolly good honest fellows they are we should be sick at heart indeed.

On Sunday we did a 25 mile march, "right out"—of all known bearings. A perfect day for marching, cool and dry. As usual on the way through Amiens the usual horses gave the inevitable exhibition of knocking the civil population off the pavement, and the usual gun got stuck in the usual crowded spot. Out of the city and westwards along the main road which marches with the river. Through dirty little Dreiul and then we stopped to water at Anez or somewhere, for 1 hour, at the end of which time we trekked on leaving the infant population replete with biscuits. On through beautiful Picquigny, and then to the left up the hill, and away over the uplands, into a thyme-scented valley, over a wooded hill, down into a little village nestling on a tributary of the Somme, over the next stretch of open country, through a park, and so through prosperous Airaines, and then into our destination—which is just a happy dream.

It is a perfectly charming village, all roses—and cafés. Its principal industry is selling eggs to the English, and a bad second is the cloth making which is propagated by the self-declamatory hand looms which you may find in every house. Our Mess is the perfect Mess. Our billet is no mere billet, but, as I have said, a happy dream.

Mews and I share this paragon. It is in a farm house, so clean that it shines. You enter by the usual gate from the road, and cross a grassy quadrangle. Pausing to wonder if this can possibly be our billet you note the building is grey stone, and grey wood and roses of no one hue. Entering, you cross a species of entrance hall-parlour, and ascend the

stairs. Passing through a ground glass door (yes, you must open it), you reach our suite. Firstly there is Mews' bedroom. Excellent bed, carpet, chair, washstand, wardrobe, etc. Leading out of it is my apartment. Super-excellent bed, armchair, lesser chairs, dressing table, and other regal appurtenances. Leading out of that is the ablution chamber with about 14 large mirrors, washstand, etc. The view from the windows is on to a garden of stock, rocket, and roses, and then an orchard sloping up the hill side, wherein (the orch.) are sundry kine. In fact the ideal place for a Summer holiday. The tout-ensemble was too much for Salmon, my gallant henchman, altogether. Woodbine in mouth and my unspeakably dirty canvas basin in hand, he was heard to mutter :

"Dunno whether ye'll use the woman's basin, sir !"

Ah me, in 2 days' time we entrain for the snowy North, somewhere St. O. way, where we shall doubtless shortly take over some line. What a restful existence it will seem. We have had no mail since we started trekking, and we are told we shall receive none till we settle in up North. Kismet.

I am going to send you cheque, when I can find an indelible pencil. I want one dozen silk Khaki hankies, a really good strong pair of putties. If obtainable a dozen silk Khaki collars.

Well, absolutely the best of everything to everybody.
From CRICK.

P.S.—Chances of leave *V.* remote, in fact negligible.

26.7.16.

My dear Dad

Thanks so much for all your letters, and please forgive me for not writing more regularly. We leave this delightful place to-morrow. I regret to say. We entrain for the North to-morrow afternoon. "Somewhere" just in France about 2 miles from Belgian border is our destination, and we shall probably be in or near the Salient. Curious that it should be exactly a year ago, to a day, since we trained up from Havre. We have learned a lot, and I at least feel a good deal more than a year older.

This village appears more and more charming as the time for leaving it approaches.

"Very sad we were to leave it, and we gave our hearts in pledge
To the roses in the village, and the blossom by the hedge,
To the apple and the poplar, and the cherry and the peach,
And the babies, Oh! the babies, romping fatly under each.
Northward Ho! to watery Flanders, where the battle drives and swings,
From the land of little children, where the babies are the Kings."

As Kipling would doubtless have put it. After all War is only an Ugly interlude in a world which embraces such places as this. At most it can but inflict a change for the better. Much love to all from Christian.

P.S.—Would be much obliged if you would send me 2 prs. Pyjamas, and 1 pr. stout riding puttees.

29.7.16.

My dear Dad

Many thanks for letter. Here we are in Flanders, about 15 miles from the line, and the Belgian border. Had a good journey on the 27th, *via* the sea coast. E——, B——, C——, etc., and detrained close here at 0.20 A.M. on the 28th. Got here at about 7 A.M. in a "wet mist from the Say," watered, fed, breakfasted, slept, washed, had a restful day, followed by a restful night and 3 P.M. finds me in the "prairie" under a fig-tree—I think. The view is pleasing if not impressive. In foreground, our jolly thatched farm house, adjacent the village of —— Hush. On the skyline poplars and a windmill. We shall probably be in action in about a week. I have reached the happy state of not caring a blow *what* happens, sufficient for the moment is the pleasure thereof. Just received yours of the 26th. Yes, bad news about the 17th. Still—la guerre. We are having a pretty good time at this one farm, but like most such things it won't last. Much love from Christian.

Fromewhere in Sanders.
Sunday Morn.

Dear Maurice

Thanks so much for all of yours, written I am sure in spirit if not in fact. Should this reach you, it will find you in camp, so that you will not read it, military operations very rightly coming first. We are about 10 miles from Wipers here, and for a short space are Corps Reserve. Not for long, however, *not* for long. Thank the Larrd we are well awa' frae the Somme. Our part in the battle was divided into two parts. Firstly we cut wire during the

7 days' preliminary bombardo, and on the day of the show we formed part of the barrage which keeps on "lifting" just ahead of the advancing Infantry. Then for a week we put up a forward barrage to repel counter-attacks on Montauban, and then we were withdrawn to Bois des T—— for a week.

Secondly, after the hun 2nd line, Bazentin-Longueval, had been taken, we were brought up suddenly to cut wire in some dead ground South of Longueval. We were caught and badly cut up by some indiscriminate hun shrapnel which was floating about, and had to withdraw. Lost our Battery Commander, and dear old Griffin and Bowman, and some men and horses. Came in later same day and stopped 4 days. Then the Div. Arty. came out and we trekked down to a non-war area bivouacking at 2 places *en route*. Got to a topping little place with perfect mess and billets where we stopped 4 days. We then trained up here, arriving the day before yesterday. We rest. It is difficult to tell you about my personal experiences, as they are so bound up with technicalities. But one gets certain pictures absolutely engraved on one's soul.

The first is during the preliminary bombardment. Carroll and I stood on top of one of our gun pits one pitch-dark night, watching the show. Everything from 18 pdrs. to 15″ appeared to be shooting. The familiar landscape showed up in fragments now here, now there, lighted by the blinding flash of the guns. A red glare and a shower of sparks every ½ minute or so represented hun Shrapnel on the Peronne road. Speech was of course impossible, and one could only stand and *feel* the thousands of tons of metal rushing away from one. Impressive enough, but what I shall never forget was a substratum of noise, an unceasing moaning roar, exactly like enormous waves on a beach. The

75's firing over Maricourt Wood, a shell passing over trees makes a noise exactly like a great wave. Or was it indeed the breakers of the Sea of Death beating against the harbour gates of the hun, beating until it swept them and him away, washed them back and threw them up, only to be washed further yet by the next tide. I think it was. The second is from Montauban valley, at dawn on the 6th July. Straight opposite was the as yet untaken Bazentin ridge, beyond which we could just see the spires and roofs of the 2 Bazentins. On the skyline High Wood. To the left, rising out of the smoke and mist the dark mass of Mametz Wood, beyond it Contalmaison. To the right—the dawn. I shall never forget that either. Silhouetted against Mithras' morning legions, all fiery red, and fierce gold, the dark sinister line ot Longueval, houses, spires *now* all gone, showing among the trees of Delville Wood. And in an open space the incongruously complete buildings, and factory chimneys of Waterlot farm. Nearer the remains of Montaubon and Trônes Wood.

The third is from the same place some hours later, when we looked down into hell on our left. A frontal attack on Contalmaison and Mametz Wood (quite different and separate from Mametz village) which we saw from our ridge to a flank. Every kind of shell bursting in the wood and village. Shrapnel, crump, incendiary, lachrymatory, and over the torn-up waste of what had once been trenches and over which our people had to advance hun "Woolly bears" (5.9″ Shrapnel), crumps, and a steady barrage of field-gun shrapnel from Baz. Wood, fortunately bursting much too high. By way of a frame for this happy scene, one saw it through the hun flank barrage bursting on the brow of our hill about 200 yards in front of us. He put a barrage on us too, but

as it was 25 yards behind us, and apparently meant to stop there, it soon ceased to worry us. Presently one saw great clouds of gas sweeping across, and I must say I felt we were looking into hell indeed. Then little black figures began to appear in the left hand corner of Hades, figures which formed into lines, which presently moved slowly forward. Gigantic shell seemed to pitch right into the line, but they still went on, now disappearing into a trench, but ever moving on forward when they reappeared, their work accomplished. And so one lost sight of them in the welter of smoke, and only saw occasional little single figures (messengers) running steadfastly back across the plain. Sometimes a shell burst and one saw them no more. Carroll arrived to relieve me and we wended our perilous way down to the battery and breakfast.

The last impression is the morning of the 17th. We went along the Briqueterie road and round into our valley of the shadow. The great valley was already nearly ploughed from end to end, and here and there whizz-bangs were bursting. We got to our position, in a sort of little hollow, and the ordered confusion of getting into action was at its height when with a shriek and a crash a shell burst some 20 yards behind us. Then a bang—and the yell of the shell case as it went through us. I remember looking down the battery. The driver standing beside me was lying killed. A Gunner who was behind me got the bullet I should otherwise have had, in the stomach. A little further on someone was bending over Wager, and I saw Bowman crawling into the trench with his leg broken.

Wounded men lying about, some dead horses. There is no hope of taking cover in a case like that, you just have to stand by your horses. Everybody behaved rippingly. I saw

little Sparkie, my groom, unconcernedly holding my ponies. Well, old spot, be good if you can't be clever. Yrs.

C. C. CARVER.

Sunday Morning, 30th July.

DEAREST MUM

Thank you so much for yours of the 26th, yours of 18th to 25th I received yesterday, no, the day before. Also the parcel of books, *Blackwood's*, *Punch*, *Illustrated*, etc. For all of which much thanks. I feel so sorry for you, old Mum, after reading yours of 25th. I can tell you I didn't like writing, but what would you? It is useless to supply anything but a true chronicle. Carroll and I cannot make out how Mrs. Budden heard of the Strafe and let you and Mrs. Carroll know, before either of you heard from us. I wrote on the 19th. We had a delightful journey up from Picardy and are now firmly and comfortably settled in Flanders. Lovely weather, and the camp is very peaceful, all the horses out grazing and certain men at church. I think the only things I want are socks, handkerchiefs, collars, and puttees. Tons of love from CRICK.

Please send collars (1 doz. silk) 1 size larger than enclosed.

1.8.16.

DEAREST MUM

How ze time 'ee pass, Eh? Thanks beaucoup for letters up to the 26th. Got the cake from Aunt Kitty, and the cakes from home, all safe and sound, likewise books and papers beyond remembrance. The *Sentimental Bloke* appealed to me as you rightly surmised. It is a cause of regret to us

that this pleasant spot will soon know us no more, but still

La vie est brève;
Un peu d'espoir,
Un peu de rève . . .
Et puis—bon soir !

I believe we are going into a quiet bit of line. I hope so, for at the moment we feel efficient but unpushful. We are always prepared to biff huns, but we prefer to do it with our comforts. Well, good-night to you all. I must now scribe to my Aunt K. T.O.L. from CRICK.

Might I trouble you to forward the enclosed effusion to its right address ?

1.8.16.

DEAR MAURICE

Thank you so much for yours at last. I am afraid that what advice I can offer to you *re* war will not be of much assistance. I am in the usual quandary. I don't want you to have anything to do with this ruddy war, but I realise that everyone ought to do something. The point is that at present you are learning the rudiments of technical soldiering in the corps, and you are learning to handle the genus homo in the house. Also you are getting the best education of its kind in the world, while you are at the right age, and unlike the army you will not have another chance to learn it. What you are doing now means so much more efficiency 6 years hence, *i.e.* so much more strength in one little link of the country's armour. Bien, now the alternative.

Firstly, put no trust in, neither be influenced by, such as Z. Mi, for whom I have neither respect nor admiration, till I meet him. A B.F. is a B.F. even though he *has* been to

the front, don't I know 'em (this has no reference to the worthy Z.). What you do, do with careful consideration, discussion and advice from Dad, and G. F. and David and as many more good counsellors as you can hit on. The nation is not in the position where it wants every man who can shoot. It wants its men, and it will have 'em, one and all, but it wants them as good, as well trained, and as efficient and developed as it can get them. When you go, *if* you go, to a Cadet school, the moral and intellectual drop in atmosphere, training, associates, etc., will be so great as to leave you high and dry. But there at all events they will work you hard, and turn you out as "officers one." Then for all that you know, or can influence, you may go to some rotten crowd whose ideals of training and deportment do not rise above treating each other to the requisite number of drinks.

Anyhow, my dear old bird, for God's sake don't be in too much of a hurry. I have been on the job out here just over a year now and I know more about the beastly thing than I could forget in a lifetime. For myself I like most of it, and I don't mind lumping the rest, because it is my job. *But* there are very miry places to go through, and it is no short journey, before you reach the more or less clean efficiency of B.E.F. Therefore it is well that you should be as full of years and good counsels as is compatible with your duty, before you undertake it. But go to Dad, and G. F. and sich for advice and you won't be far wrong. Sorry your VIth are so mouldy, hoof 'em out, and make some good VIth power from the younger idea (but perhaps it *had* occurred to you !). Yrs. C. C. CARVER.

8.8.16.

My dear Dad

Here we are in action again. We have got a jolly place for the battery, strong and well hidden. The officers live in a miraculously preserved villa. Comfortable but not very safe. This is a perfectly rotten country for Artillery, flat as a table, so that observation is V. difficult. An infantry war hereabouts. No news of leave starting. When it *does* I shan't get it for some time as the battery would only be allowed to send an officer every so often, and Mews, Patterson, and Carroll go before me. Many thanks for the cricket balls etc. I hope we shall soon have a chance of using them. I have received 2 collars and a handkerchief for which many thanks. Just received yours of the 5th and the parcel of collars and hanks. etc., for which very many thanks indeed. Love from Christian.

The Grease Spot.
8.8.16.

Dearest Mum

Thanks most awfully for yours of the 4th. No we didn't wire to Capt. B. as everything was so upset. I hear to-day that he is passed for home service only, so that finishes it. I am awfully sorry, we need him badly, and I am sure he will be frightfully sick. Also got the parcel of collars, puttees, Mags. etc., for which *much* thanks. We are in action again, and in a comfortable spot. No knowing how long we shall be here, or what will happen after that. Thank Hump much for his letter. Much love to all from

Crick.

Would you mind forwarding enclosed. [To Molly Napier-C.]

12.8.16.

DEAR HUMP

Just a wee bit line. Thanking you and Mum and Francis so much for sweating over to see one of our crocks. I was rather anxious about Moore really because you know how awful anyone looks with a wound in the mouth. He and Wager's groom only joined us when Wager did, that is at the beginning of the push. His groom is a weird little man, talks French and is almost unintelligibly Scotch, always knows everything about what is going on. He was very upset at losing Wager and Moore at one fell swoop. We are gradually getting news of all our casualties. There is still one mystery though, a man called Speight, my best bombardier, he was rather badly hit and I had a letter from his people in Yorkshire the other day, saying that after the notification that he was wounded, they hadn't heard a single word from or about him. Rotten. Things are very quiet here, as things go. We had a moderately warm time when we first came in but our retaliatory frightfulness has quieted brother b. down a bit. Would you thank Dad very much for the pyjamas, socks etc. which arrived this evening. No symptoms of leave yet. Tons of love to all from

CRICK.

15.8.16.

DEAREST MUM

Thanks frightfully for yours of the 10th. Of course I went and thanked Aunt Katalina for a cake when it should have been a book; to whom am I indebted for the said cake? Just got *large* box of cakes, also *Punch*, *Byst.* and *Illustrated.* Thanks bien. Absolutely no news whatever here, except just between us and Fritz don't you know. We live on

the wildest rumours, and extract our money's worth of lies from all the wandering Sappers, unemployed trench mortarites and machine gunners and such, who visit our Villa. Would you tell Dad I got the pyjamas etc. all right, many thanks. Would you let me know how much I owe everybody. I know I am disgracefully casual with my accounts. The lemons were a great success, they made our little house feel very like home. Don't send any more for the moment, as I can "purchase locally." Although this is a beast of a flat country, it has one compensation, that the civil population and attendant boutiques are very much among us. We have civilian neighbours on either hand, and about a quarter of a mile back are decent little shops. They could give some of our people, particularly East Coasters, a good many points in "carrying on." Much love to all from

C.

Carroll had a letter from Mrs. Griffin to-day to say that H. J. S. G. had been discharged from Hop. with 2 months' sick leave. Lucky, lucky devil.

18.8.16.

DEAREST MUM

Thank you so much for the letter on the journey down to Devonshire, and the one written on the morning after. It all sounds too heavenly for words. As for us, things are a trifle dreary. No end in sight; I suppose we shall struggle along trusting to luck and hoping we shall win through somehow. Thanks very much indeed for the cider, which arrived 2 days ago. Also a large box of cakes. Please thank A.D.A. most awfully for all her trouble. Excuse such a mouldy line but news is scarce. Much love from

CHRISTIAN.



The Grease Spot.
18.8.16.

My dear Dad

Thanks very much for yours of the 12th. Weatherbury sounds very lonely and cheerless without the family, I am sure you will be jolly glad to see them all back again. It makes my mouth water to hear of them all trekking down to Devonshire. I have reached that stage of absolute fed-upness with the war and everything pertaining to it, that to travel in an English train with a civilized destination in view, seems the most desirable thing on earth. At the moment I would give a lot to get out of France, although I quite realize that I should soon wish myself back again. I got the case of cider the other day, which was most acceptable. Almonds and raisins are always rather a treat. Awfully good of Uncle Arthur to send £10, I will certainly write and thank him. Thanks very much indeed for the collars, pyjamas, which are all exactly what I wanted. Love from

Christian.

The Grease Spot.
21.8.16.

My dear Maurice

I gather from G. F.'s letter to you that last term was ticklish work, hearty congrats. on piloting the house so successfully through it. I don't look upon it as possible or desirable that you should see any actual fighting in "this dreadful War" and I think that you must look upon it from this point of view, which I think you have heard me state before. You can either chuck up being head of the house, at a time when it would be nothing short of criminal, and leave it in an awful hole, for the sake of being able to say, when your grandchildren cluster round your gouty knee,

piping in childish trebles, "What did *you* do in the great War, Grand-pa?" "Children, I took unto myself a commission, I donned the khaki, I learned to form fours and drink cherry brandy at No. 9897 camp, Slinghampton." Rather a good sentence, it conducts you from 1. Hillmorton viâ your 2nd childhood to Slinghampton. Or else, you can continue at your job which is necessary, difficult, instructive and extremely thankless, in fact, *really* serve your country, while the credit for same goes to 2nd Lt. Faceache, who could no more do head of the house than milk a crocodile. *Some*body has got to do it, and it is rather sickening for G. F., when after a lot of worry and stress he selects you as H.H., when moreover you have justified his choice in that you pull the house through a bad period, that you should then start getting discontented because you hanker after something totally different. I think you must guard against that. You don't mind all these home truths do you? I know the real reason is that you want to be out here with me. My dear old bird, if only you could have a magic ring round you keeping you exempt from shells, bombs, bullets, bayonets, boches, etc., it would be the one thing I should pray for. But you can't, and when you add to that the fact that we could not be in the same Regiment, let alone battery, that even if you get out here, there would be less than 1 chance in a million of our ever meeting, can you wonder that I think that one is enough, and heartily hope that none of you will ever see the dirty end of this infernal show. I sometimes think that war is *all* criminal folly, and that the excuse that we were forced into it does not excuse us. That we ought to have foreseen and taken measures to prevent it. If you saw a peer of the realm fighting a hooligan, would you take it as an excuse that the hooligan started it. No, you would say,

"more fool him for not providing a policeman." Yes, I admit the force of your objection, but we are too ready to prove ourselves in the right; any old specious excuse does. I don't know about your history books, but in all the ones I have read, it is put forward blandly, when we hung back here, and failed a friend there, that we were perfectly right because it was our duty to ourselves as a nation to refrain from any interference on the continent, and devote ourselves to bagging colonies, see "Our Colonial Expansion." What we really meant was that interference was "no bon" because we shouldn't get any land out of it, territory on the continent being for us untenable, oblivious of the fact that we might be fighting peoples or influences which, if not squashed, would rise and squash us. I loathe *all* Germans, but can't you believe that he found our attitude exasperating? It is only when the people and influence *have* risen to try and squash us, that we start to chat about fighting for the sake of freedom etc. What do *you* think, you historical old bloke. I have just got over a bad 4 days, resulting from a touch of "flu" and the reaction after the Somme. I felt mentally run down, and totally incapable of winding myself up again. The state of mind when you sit down and hate everything, shells, trenches and the hopeless unending vista of shells and trenches in the future. When you feel you would give absolutely *anything* to get away. It passes off, I am glad to say. Well, tweet-tweet, old bird, I'm getting peckish. Yrs. CHICK.

The Grease Spot.
22.8.16.

DEAREST MUM

Thanks so much for your letters, and the cider and every-

thing. Heddon Vale must be lovelier than ever, it fairly makes me homesick, though I wouldn't miss hearing about it for worlds. It must be lonely work for poor Dad though. We seem to be forging on steadily on the Somme, and we have nearly got the Boche blindfolded for the winter. We have only got a few more days here, and then goodness only knows where we shall land up.[1] Yes, Captain B. started his knee trouble when we played a Rugger Match at D—s. I heard from Bowman the day before yesterday. Very indignant with Carroll and me because he wrote 4 letters to us and never got an answer. We only received one written on the 20th of last month, which Carroll wrote a long answer to. There is something seriously wrong somewhere. He is in a top-hole place, the Endsleigh Palace Hospital, Endsleigh Gardens, N.W. A room to himself etc. He is still "hanging by the leg to a pole at end of bed." I feel very annoyed about the letters (he sent money for one thing) because we are absolutely the only friends he has got, this side the equator, and he must feel very much on his own. Good old Bowman, he *was* a real sterling fellow, and I liked him immensely. A lovely morning here, and the flatlands are peaceful, the only sounds being the throb of de Havilland and the occasional Ba-a-h-Oopp! of that strife stirrer the 60 pdr. Well, tons of love to all the Aunts and brethren from CRICK.

22.8.16.

MY DEAR ADA

Please forgive the belatedness of this line, thanking you very much indeed for your letters, and all the trouble that my parcels must give you. But they are always sure of a warm

[1] Some of the letter here cut out by Censor.

reception this end, and cakes for tea fall like raindrops on a desert. It is a curious thing, I noticed it last Easter too, that as soon as the holidays begin I can absolutely feel them out here. I suppose it is Telepathy or Stenography or something of the kind. What do you think. I suppose the country is as lovely as ever, and the hill up from Hunter's Inn as steep. 'Twere ever thus, what Ho she bumps. My best respects to Mab and Francis, note the order, from

CHRISTIAN.

24.8.16.

MY DEAR DAD

Many thanks for yours of the 20th. I enclose a line to Uncle Arthur, would you mind forwarding it? I was so sorry to hear about poor old Francis's arm, rough luck on the poor little bloke. I heard from Bowman the other day, he is doing well but will be in hospital for some time and out of action for some months. I also had a long letter from Captain Budden this morning. He is being "boarded" again on the 25th, and hopes to get back to the division. I doubt it, as he does, for he is at present commanding a very young Howitzer battery. I saw G. F.'s letter, and very bracing I thought it. By the way, Bowman is at the Endsleigh Palace Hospital, Endsleigh Gardens, N.W. (in case you are in town at all) do you know it? I should be so much obliged if you would send me *The Nightborn*, Jack London (I see *Punch* speaks well of it) and *The Reef of Stars*, H. de Vere Stacpoole, if they are obtainable at reasonable cost. Also would you mind sending me my "Everyman" edition of Matthew Arnold, and Browning. Much love from

CHRISTIAN.

Chez Napoleon's "Batman."
28.8.16.

My dearest Mum

Behold us out of the line again. Just in time, I was nearly extinct with boredom. You doubtless (do not) remember Kipling makes Laughton O. Zyler say that the English don't mind being killed, but the idea of being bored simply knocks them. And very true it is. We move off to-morrow and proceed some way by train. Our exact future is at present unknown, but we are for the cauldron again, that is pretty certain. We are staying at a farm (as usual), a nice farm, a clean farm, and a desirable farm. We came down on the night of the 25th and have had a very pleasant week end. To my great joy I discovered a Gramophone shop in a local town, so we depart with a heavier gramophone box and lighter pockets. I was so sorry about François's arm, I do hope it is well on its way to recovery. Thanks frightfully for all your letters. As you must have gathered I have completely recovered from my fit of despondency. What I do say is, to quote my gunner's letter, "Roll on the end," soit. Much love from

Christian.

1.9.16.

Dearest Mum

I never got a chance of posting the enclosed of the 28th, so I am afraid you will not have heard from me for some time. We had a successful trek on the 29th, and were met by the news that we were for the battle right away. We bivouacked the night near the station, and marched up into the familiar old country on the 30th. Further north than we have been before though. Bivouacked the night of the

30th, marched the following day, and here we are, camped close behind "our 'Bert," of fame. We go up into action the day after to-morrow. Great news about Bulgaria and Roumania is it not? The jolly old Ger must be getting chilly as to the feet, unlike myself, now that I have the excellent socks from Aunt Kitty, for which please thank her very much. Also many thanks for yours of the 25th, and the heather. Just seen letters to Carroll, from Budden, Griffin and Bowman, they all seem to be getting on flourishingly. I am sorry to say that Speight died in hospital at Rouen on the 22nd. Much love to all from

CRICK.

3.9.16.

DEAREST MUM

Thank you so very much for your letters of the 27th, 28th, 29th, I see I shall have to mind my P's and Q's, or the censor will be cutting up my letters altogether. Carroll has had simply reams cut out of his, and the majority of his to Budden, Bowman, and Griffin, and vice versâ, have never arrived at all. I wonder what your premonition *re* our movements *was*. At lunch on the 28th our destination for following day was most unexpectedly altered. Psychics would doubtless explain the difference in time, because you would naturally get it when your mind was free from anything else. However it yet remains to be seen whether you were right or not. No news, at least there *is*, but I must not tell you it. We go up to the line to-morrow. There is one thing, one is never bored in this sort of fighting, like one is in ordinary trench warfare. Very very much love to all from CRICK.

Please forward enclosed to Aunt Fanny.

8.9.16.

DEAREST MUM

Just a bit scrawl to thank you for all the letters and things and to let you know I gerflourish like the jolly old baytree. Just back from the trenches, my God talk about a desert, I think that infinite waste of shells and shell-holes licks creation. Weather here is moderately kind though damp. Great things all around us. But——those Scissors! that album. Tons of love to all from CHRISTIANO.

8.9.16.

MY DEAR DAD

Excuse me tarrying thus long in writing. Thanks very much for the books, which were most welcome. We are now back in the old locality, fighting fairly strenuously. The battery position is a pretty soft spot, as we have the hun blindfolded in these parts. But there is a lot of trench work to be done, and to put it mildly, it is "no bon." However we are pushing the Ger. which is the great thing. The *Reef of Stars* is not too bad at all, rather in the style of *The Pools of Silence* though. You would expect it to be more like *The Blue Lagoon.* I read it yesterday and last night while doing Liaison with the infantry, at the bottom of a 30 ft. dug-out, which the hun (for it used to be his) shells heavily, but crumps in vain. Heaps of respects to all from C. C. CARVER.

I should say CHRISTIAN.

10.9.16.

DEAR GODMOTHER

I have a loathsome suspicion that I never thanked you for the Edinburgh rock, Shortbread, and sweets, that you sent me the other day. Truth to tell we were out of the

line at the time, so we thoroughly appreciated them; I say "*we*" because, my present battery commander, one Paterson, is a Scotchman, and likes them even more than I do, at least, he eats more, and with horrid gusto. I was so busy—resting, that I never wrote and thanked you, for which I heap the ashes of metaphor upon my head (Lard how the lad does talk). We discovered a Gramophone shop, and only those who have played their present stock about umteen thousand times, can appreciate what new records mean. You can get simply topping French music, but our allies have a mistaken idea that British officers only buy hymn tunes, and patriotic drivel of the "Rule Britannia" type, at least that is all they ever stock. All goes well with the fight here, I hope 36 Fairhazel, is enjoying tranquil days and happy. Your affectionate God-son C. C. CARVER.

13.9.16.

DEAREST MUM

Thanks so much for your letters, last being the 8th. Everything here is much as usual, and so far the battery remains more or less unmolested. I must say I don't see any end to this jolly old war in sight yet. I don't see *how* it will end. Germany will get too short of men I suppose, but she can shorten her fronts pretty considerably. I saw the fellow who was my under officer in the term senior to ours at the shop, yesterday, one does run across people in the quaintest places. Simply heaps of love to all from CRICK.

15.9.16.

MY DEAR DAD

Excuse my long tarrying in taking up my pencil indelible. Before I forget, I am somewhat in need of a new

pair of boots, as the non "lotus" boots of last year are upon their last feet. This morning I played a very minor part in a "push." A very H. G. Wellsian battle, how little one thought that one would so shortly see mechanical monsters as actual facts. I was F.O.O. so had a splendid view of the whole show. A "Movie man" was busily filming away alongside me, in fact I nearly gained cheap immortality by walking in front of him, so doubtless you will witness the identical battle,—— though under more comfortable circumstances! Unfortunately after the "movie" had departed, the hun started throwing 8″ shells at our poor little inoffensive trench. A "dud" covered us with earth, to the ankles, the next round,—burst—and buried us to the waist, so we decided it was time to go elsewhere. I have seen some quaint Ger. prisoners lately, but the rabble that was fished out of the remains of the Ger. position beat the lot. I'll swear some of them were not more than 16, and a lot of them were niggers! Now I ask yer Mr. blooming Censor, *is* there any harm in such gossip. I also saw a Ger. balloon brought down in flames, but the occupant escaped in a parachute, what a pity! Please tell Ada that I have received the large parcel of cakes. I am sure the enclosed Reproach from Reps (whoever it is) will leave her heartbroken. Love to all from CRICK.

17.9.16.

DEAREST MUM,

Thanks so much for your last, enclosing Mott's card, and Aunt F's letter. All goes pretty well here, and the weather is not too bad. But chilly, and I should be so much obliged if you would send me out a cardigan, the one you bought me when I went to "the Shop," has joined the ranks

of the dear departed, having done yeoman service. Well it is sad to think that the Summer holidays 1916 are nearly over. Let's hope this 'ere war is ditto, ditto. Give my love to everybody and wish Francis the best of luck from me.

CRICK.

[Francis was going to school for the first time. A.C.]

DEAREST MUM

September 22nd, and a fine day, thank God. Only those who have indulged in this particular breed of warfare can appreciate what bad weather means. We had 3 real bad days, and it was real war then, not playing at soldiers. To arise at 5.30 A.M. on a wet dreary morning, to start off at 6, through the mud, to a somewhat unhealthy locality, to spend a long day digging. "Ce n'est pas magnifique, mais c'est la guerre." Everything here is most uncertain, as it is bound to be of course, and I couldn't give you any idea of our future movements, even if I was allowed to. I want a new sleeping bag, my old one is tattered beyond repair. I should be so much obliged if somebody would get me one, and let me know what it costs. The last number of the *Illustrated* gives you a good idea of our locality, and of course Griffin hits the nail on the head exactly. Received a letter from Mrs. Palmer, and also letters from M. and H. this morning. I find that the responsibilities of a battery, and all the problems and complications of this life, weigh much more heavily in rainy weather. Heaps of things to be done so I must switch off. Heaps of love to all from CRICK.

To his Father.

25.9.16.

Thanks so much for your letter. I am so glad you went

to see old Bowman, and thought as I do that he is a good sort. The weather here is absolutely perfect, we simply couldn't have it better for the "push." As usual we have no idea of our future movements, we just go on fighting. Capt. Budden is back and is commanding C/84. I hope you all enjoyed the trip to town. I am afraid I must now stop as we are busy (*i.e.* about to have tea). Heaps of love to all from CHRISTIAN.

27.9.16.

DEAREST MUM

Just a scrawl to let you know that censored . . . and myself are progressing favourably. I was F.O.O. censored . . . . yesterday, but didn't have much of a view. During the last 2 months we have had a lot to do with the Australians and Canadians . . . . . as for the Canadians, well, I am very thankful I am not a hun. They are simply grand. As you can imagine we get a good deal of amusement out of the remarks one hears dropped. One frightfully wet day we were wading through about 3 feet of mud, and met a very fed-up Canadian Highlander, who accosted us and enquired in the richest Canadian, "Say, can you direct me to the Ha—a—rbour Ma—ster?" Thank you very much for the last consignment of cakes, we had been cakeless for several days, and their appearance was hailed with joy. I suppose the "Castle" is empty of offspring, for the first time, it must seem dismal. We must get all the lads home, if I get a leave—which isn't likely. Well simply heaps of love from CRICK.

I have decided to censor certain portions of this effusion.

29th September, 1916.

DEAREST MUM

Thank you so much for your letter of the 23rd, and the perfectly delightful parcel; I am wearing the cardigan, which is really top hole, also the joyful socks (among others) for the day is wet and gum boots are much in request. The books I hope shortly to enjoy; the sketch books are charming—Oh, my lovely land of Arden, who could look at one of those doorways alone, and not give his heart to you for ever. September 23rd, I do hope you all enjoyed "Fanny." That was the day we moved up to this position and we were very much at war. We all came up in the morning to dig, and suddenly got orders to bring our guns up in the afternoon. While you were having tea I went down to try and bring up some food for the men, and some of our blankets, kits, etc. Sent the wagon up laden with vital necessities, and arrived here at 9 P.M. to learn that the wagon was ditched, and not a scrap of food or a blanket had arrived. If you are a gunner, have breakfasted at 6 A.M., and done a jolly hard day's work, this is a serious matter. However we got everything up by midnight, and now we shall be sorry to leave the place. It is always the same—when one goes into a position it looks like the jaws of hell, but by the time you come to leave it, it is—very nearly—a little corner of heaven, compared to the next place. Had I only known you were all at the "Royal," it would have been the greatest comfort! September is nearly over; we have seen some stirring times, and some rough ones, and we have made a lot of History in the last month. We all of us grumble a bit occasionally, but we would not have missed it for worlds; by we, I mean the Divisional Artillery. It is *the* place to be after all. Here, England is winning out

against the heaviest odds that the world has ever seen. What Ho she bumps! Curious that H. Fulford should be on the same page as Charlie, also the picture of the sign board in our local town here. Heaps of love, from

CRICK.

2nd October, 1916.

MY DEAR DAD

Very many thanks for the boots which are O.K. (Please tell Mum the cider has arrived and is being much appreciated.) We have moved a bit again and we are now scrapping over a tough nut which has recently been cracked, so that we can fairly say that we have seen the push from end to end. We are in quite a good spot at the moment, but shan't stay here long I trow. The wandering Jew is an absolute stay at home compared to us. Naish has now the privilege of having two Carvers within its fold once more. When Francis leaves, there will have been a Carver there for jolly nearly ten years. Then I suppose there will be a pause—and then the next generation will start in!

I think the moment for gloves is close at hand and I should be very glad of a couple of pairs of leather gloves, lined. I measure three inches across the knuckles.

Captain Budden has returned to the Divisional Artillery, and is at present commanding C/84. What are the latest lies about the duration of the war? Captured Ger Officers are reported to have been very surprised that no overtures for Peace have been made, as no one in Germany wants war, or aggression. They didn't think it was up to Germany to sue, as that would look like an admission of defeat, but they thought it was up to us as the *Greater Power*!! This officially, but somehow it does not ring true from a Hun

Officer. We had a very interesting "White Book" round of all the more pessimistic documents, diaries, and letters captured. By Jove, they do hate us. "We know the English mercenaries were driven into this brutal murder by their money, but I myself think there must have been some more human reason as well." Poor Fritz, he never had a ehance to extend his theories. Even to a mercenary like myself, there is something rather comic in the idea of rushing into the fray, blinded by love of gold. There is a prisoners' cage alongside us here, where some interesting specimens can usually be viewed. I hope the Zepps will get short shrift, should they have the temerity to approach Brum. Even here we are sometimes worried by bombastic Taubes. Love to all, from CHRISTIAN.

5.10.16.

DEAREST MUM

Thank you so much for your last letter, the one written on the day before Maurice left for Rugby. I feel aggrieved (two g's ?). We know that comic old Pharaoh had to put up with one plague at a time, but we are suffering from an epidemic of frogs, *and* flies, not to mention newts. That's the worst of living on a river. Hush ! you *must* not let the enemy suspect the presence of rivers near the allied line. I feel sure you will be grieved to hear that our old Friend Thorn of the E. Surrey's has been killed,—you remember his brother was killed about this time last year. Also many other friends, worse luck. I suppose it is all in the day's work. Captain B. is back and commanding C/84 for the present. Vague rumours of leave opening, am calculating the number of months to my turn ! I am now content, for have I not Cardigan, boots, and flea-bag (or rather newt

bag). We had a young battle this morning, and hope the Hun has lost another landmark, though no information yet to hand. I am sure Francis will enjoy Naish, pourquoi non? I feel I know awfully little about Francis, really, but he is a sterling little chap, and when Naish has squared him up a bit he "ought to give us no anxiety." I thought David Blaize showed an extraordinarily fresh and vivid memory of prep. and pub. school age. Had a rambling letter from Griffin two days ago, he writes from Southsea. Tons of love, from CHRISTIAN.

4.10.16.

MY DEAR HUMPHREY

How are you and Francis and everybody. Write and tell me how Francis takes to it. You must impress upon him that he has a lot to live up to! The weather here is unspeakably wet and horrible, bad for the push which is serious, and it makes me cross which is worse. I wrote you quite a long letter the other day, left it for 2 days, and on re-reading it, found it such utter rot that I tore it up. We have moved again, a short distance, and are now in a rather better position, as far as the Battery is concerned. A disused gun-pit serves as Officers' mess, the table is loot, the furniture ammunition boxes, the walls and ceiling are a very pretty shade of corrugated iron, the floor is some rather jolly mud, and we have a stove and a home-made electric bell for communicating with the servants. We are next door to a prisoners' cage, and see all the latest Bosches. Poor miserable bedraggled Fritz. You might remember me to T. and the C. also Mossy, Nicky, Mrs. Mossy and Miss Evie. Best of love to you and Francis, from CRICK.

10.10.16.

DEAREST MUM

I got your letters from 29th to 3rd, at about 9.30 p.m. on the 8th, also from M., H., and F., 2 magazines and the "Illustrated." SOME mail. I read the family journal in bed, and very cheering I found it, though I fear you don't feel too fearfully jolly. I am cutting my wisdom teeth! The path of knowledge is as usual not the path of pleasure, for the young hopefuls have started up my old enemy on the rampage,—Jealousy I suppose. Together with Sparke my faithful little groom and retainer—I rode about 60 (apparently) miles to see a dentist. Arrived there, he proved a brute. "Cutting my wisdom teeth, couldn't do anything for me—he saw there was one stopped, here (this the enemy) —Whack! he expected that hurt—thought so. Let's have a look round—GEE here's a bad one—roke him out—blast of icy water—have to be treated, put something on to kill the nerve—Come back in 3 days' time." He even proposed to unstop the enemy, and kill the nerve. I give you these harrowing details, not so much from motives of self-pity, as because I feel they are a milestone in my career. Wearily, Sparke and I wended our way back, and not even the sight of the numerous Ger prisoners working along the road, each complete with cloth cap and large circular blue patch, on seat of breeches, not even the unter offizier, with inevitable iron cross, who salutes us smartly as we pass, none of these I say could cheer us up. On arrival back we found the Battery about to move to a new position, close by. Our new home is not too bad, an enormous amount of labour has been expended on it, much of which we think however might have been employed to better effect. But are we ever satisfied? I hope we get out for a rest soon as

everyone needs it, from the greatest even unto the least. I wish you could know Carroll, he is absolutely the salt of the earth to my mind. Heaps of love to you and Ada and all from CRICK.

P.S.—Thanks so much for last consignment of cakes. I am enjoying *The School for Saints.*

10.10.16.—My dear Francis, many thanks indeed for your letter. Sorry that the weather is inclement, and that you are burdened with a bookworm as neighbour,—but beware, oh my brother, for in after life he will probably be Lord Chancellor while you work out his accounts to 3 places of decimals. Glad you have been weighed. I hope your avoirdupois (Now then Humphrey that's a stinker!) proved satisfactory. How is the arm? nearly ready for footer I trust. How do you like A. Dorm., in virtue of my advanced age (11) I started my scholastic career in the large "North" and what is now the 3rd Form. Yrs.

C. C. CARVER.

13.10.16.

DEAREST MUM

I am so glad you enjoyed town, and saw Bowman, it certainly would be nice if he could come to us at Xmas hols. I think he is a real diamond. And a more typical Australian I never wish to meet. You can see he is really in his element on an Australian Waler with his "billy" of tea, and a tin of bully. What a pity you just missed Griffin, he would have been so totally unlike what you expected. Paid another visit to the dentist yesterday, fortunately a nearer and a nicer one. I rode *via* Paul Gibb's place of business, I don't think I have ever seen such traffic. Of course I have to go again the day after to-morrow, but I

hope that will be the last. We are pretty comfortable here, and things generally are going well. I must gerswitch now, as I have been glaring at — Redoubt all day, and the light is not of the best. Good-night my dearest Mum.

CRICK.

Our home.
13.10.16.

MY DEAR ADA

I wish you could see our home. It is a large subterranean apartment, with a continual forced draught at the rate of 30 m.p.h. In one corner is our gramophone dispensing melody. In another is our stove; owing to the aforementioned (alloneword) draught, it becomes white hot after 15 minutes, melts the chimney, and sets the floor on fire—but there, a little water soon puts that right. It fills the place with sparks, gives no heat except to the outside air, and makes it a physical impossibility for anyone to enter the dugout—but otherwise it is a very good stove, and then there is our electric bell, you *would* love that. One ring for the Captain's servant, 2 for mine, and so on, a long one when the dugout catches fire. And then there's our armoury, we did not buy or collect it—it just occurred. To date it is as under—

One Canadian Rifle.
One German Rifle.
One "Very" Pistol (object unknown).
One German Bludgeon (Briton brainer).
Several Revolvers.
A number of bayonets (used as pokers).

Then there's our candle-stick, a very fine brass one, also an ex-German. Yes, altogether I have seen worse homes than

ours—you see there is no lack of thrills, that's the great thing. I really started out to apologise for not writing before to thank you for all your awfully kind trouble in sending off my parcels. They *are* good—their appearance in our home elicits the unstinted words of praise "Lovely Gubbins," than which the language of the period can show no higher. So you now have the spare room, for the first time since you & I & the infant Hump occupied it, while Mott had some fell disease at Duncombe. Not exactly yesterday is it?

I must stop now, as a terrific new chimney is in action, which makes even more smoke than usual—and I can't write in a gas helmet. Yrs. C. C. CARVER.

17.10.16.

MY DEAR DAD

Your surmise *re* whereabouts is perfectly correct. Thanks very much for the gloves, I expect they will turn up this evening, and I will let you know how they are. The papers are arriving all right, and very welcome they are. I sent your note to Cox on, but one of his brighter lady clerks sent the pass book on to me. It turned up last night and seems to be O.K., I am now the master of the noble sum of £140 : 14 : 8 and £100 in deposit account. What do you think of putting another £50 in? Am I right in supposing that by putting it in d. a. I get interest, but am income taxed on that amount which I should not otherwise be? The Germans are getting a very thick (or thin) time of it down here. The precise object of the "push" is very difficult to grasp to anyone who doesn't know the country; I wish I could take you up to our beautiful Observing Station, and I could show you the whole thing at a glance

—in fact, should Haig be knocked out, you need not be anxious, for right here is a worthy understudy! This last is that fantastic boastfulness which passes for humour with our generation, when nothing better is to hand. Military experts who write to the papers, very often harp on the seeming truism that the mere capture of ground is not the object of an offensive, it is the casualties inflicted on the enemy. I am not at all sure that it *is* a truism. War has changed so much and so rapidly, even the "push" is so different to what everybody expected in pre-push times. The German may lose men, but there are always more men to make up for the loss. But ground that he has specially chosen with a view to hiding his Artillery and approaches, and giving us the least chance of hiding ours, when he loses that he can never make it good. The Ger has the instinct for picking ground more than we have, though he is not as good as the French. When he dug in on the Western Front he was free in most places to choose his own ground. Well enough while he can hold it. But now that we have waxed great in men and munitions we can push him off his crest, and at one fell swoop his artillery and approaches are placed at a disadvantage, while ours are immensely improved. The object of any great modern offensive is to achieve this in an exaggerated degree. This we have done, the boche knows it, and knows too that far from having gone through his worst times, he is only just *beginning* to feel his quandary and our advantage. A bas le boche! Love to all, from

CHRISTIAN.

CHÈRE MAMAN

Just to tell to address me A/83rd Bde. R.F.A. till further notice. I believe we are getting out at *last*. But Quien Sabé? Love from CRICK.

19.10.16.

DEAREST MUM

Thanks so much for all your letters. I hope the rumour about Philip G. proved untrue. I wonder what battalion of the Surrey's Burdett got into, funny if it should be our old friends the 8th; there are only Colonel Irwin, Major Clair, Dr. Gimson, Thorley, the adjutant, and Capt. Bowen left, that we know. Il pleut. Otherwise things are going well. Heaps of love to you and Ada, from

CRICK.

19.10.16.

MY DEAR DAD

I received the cakes and gloves last night, and the latter are just right. Thanks very much indeed for them. It is pouring dismally to-day, and apart from everything else it makes the dug-outs fall in. Very sorry to hear about Philip G. being wounded, I hope it is not serious. I have a pretty good idea where his division are. Love from

CHRISTIAN.

23.10.16.

DEAREST MUM

Thank you so much for your letters of the 17th and 16th and previous. The left side of my mouth is now perfectly sound, and the wisdom teeth cut. The right side is just starting "wisdom teeth," and is having a nerve killed. I was to report to Dentist to-day, with dead nerve, to have it filled. Judge of my horror, having at last tracked the torturer to his lair, when I was informed that for the first time in his professional career the man was ill, and could not officiate! Sickening. Great doings here and please

God we shall soon be round the mark buoy and roaring home with all sail set and drawing. How we long for it, for surely we have seen the worst and hardest. All the fatigue, all the weariness, all the staleness are forgotten, when we think of that. No, that rest does not seem very near just at present, but I daresay it is nearer than we think. I had a letter the night before last from G. A. Millar (I was his fag at Rugby) with whom I had been corresponding at long intervals, he said he was attached to R.G.A. battery preparatory to getting one of his own. Quite accidentally I heard of the battery in these parts, and yesterday he walked up to the O.P. ! He was in to tea to-day, where I found him on my return from the fruitless pilgrimage. I walked home with him and as usual we talked of many things. It is very nice to run across one of one's own lot now and then—I only see Carroll about once a week. I also heard from Bowman this evening, who had just got £104 odd for his wound. "An English mercenary" you see. Saw my old Dr. Gimson of the Surreys in town to-day. Asked him about Burdett, but they have so many new officers he could not be certain. Well, I will switch now as I must write to R. Stuart Bowman. Heaps of love from CHRISTIAN.

27.10.16.

MY DEAR DAD

Many thanks for your letters. I have now taken on the Wagon Line job for a bit, from Carroll, and I dwell in a tent, a little oasis in a sea of mud. Poor old Rumania—it shows how unwise it is to take on an enemy with 2 years' bitter experience without having had it yourself. The

French really are extraordinary—this last show at Verdun must be the most unkindest cut of all for the Ger. We get papers ("yesterdays") very regularly, and also the "London Wireless" communiqué. I am enjoying the change of work and getting a look at the poor muddy old "shins" again. Change and—no, no! 5 minutes after I took over from Carroll, I got instructions to proceed to a H.Qrs. umteen miles away, where I would get instructions to proceed umteen miles further on, to draw remounts. The usual business. We arrived shortly after dark, in frantic haste because we were half an hour late. The R.T.O. expected the train "any minute"—justified in that it *did* arrive at 11 P.M.—Mules.—12 lovely mules. Tired but thankful we got back here at 3 A.M. Not so the mules, as Kipling would say "Far otherwise." My wisdom teeth are coming through well and have been very nice about it lately. I wonder if you would mind sending me 2 pairs of "Arctic socks" for wear in gum boots, over 2 pairs of socks. They are the only things that keep one's feet dry and anything like warm. I am in receipt of a short but pithy letter from Francis, bidding me give "his hate to the huns," and enquiring *re*-Tanks with drawing attached. He is creditably informed that there is a match the following day. I am out of writing paper and envelopes, —this is borrowed from Carroll—would you mind sending me some. Much love from CHRISTIAN.

27.10.16.

MY DEAR FRANCIS

Yes tanks I have seen plenty. Yours,

C. C. C.

29.10.16.

DEAREST MUM

Thanks so much for your letters of 22nd and 23rd giving all the noos. I am afraid there is not much to give in return. We are pursuing a policy of waiting at present, which comes rather hard on everybody. At the moment I am in the Wagon line, looking after the 'osses, for a change. It is horribly cold and wet at present, and I find the little oil stove in my tent a very necessary factor in life. I think the "Warwickshire Water-Colours" absolutely charming. Colour means everything to me. I like Guy's Cliffe Mill and Stratford-on-Avon the best I think. I finished the *School for Saints* and have just read *John Verney*, I thought the latter much better than *The Hill*, I love these stories about wonderful political people, with apparently exactly the same education as oneself. How do they do it? I am afraid I shall go through life taking a lot from it, but giving very little. Our principal theme of interest here is needless to say "After the War" what will become of these 5 great armies, containing the pick of the nation, and being used for a special purpose, separate from home defence? X. and I hold entirely opposite views. X.'s only apparent stake in the country is a very aged widowed Mother in Aberdeen, with whom he never apparently holds any communication. He has never lived in the country when he could help it and has done his work in Southern Lands. He holds the pre-war army in the profoundest contempt, principally owing to the fact that his experience of it has been largely limited to such flotsam and jetsam as "remittance men" and fellows who have been turned out of the Service. He divides "Regular Soldiers" into 2 large headings. (1) Aristocrats, whose ancestors have been in the Service, and

who enter it for no other reason. (2) Rich ne'er do weel parvenus who are sent into the army to keep them out of mischief. He allows a small margin for fellows who take up soldiering because they like it, and as a profession. If ever there was a born soldier and gunner it is X. He is the finest scientific and practical gunner I know, and he is the bravest man I know. But he is absolutely devoid of sympathy, especially as far as the men are concerned. If a man is not of the best, he cannot accept him for what he is worth. After the war he is absolutely convinced that he will be kicked out to where he came from, the country having no further use for him. "After the War" for him means a peacetime like we had before, though with a slightly increased Army. I, on the contrary, have had everything from the country. I owe it more than I can ever hope to pay. I only go part of the way with X. in his estimate of the pre-war army. I tell him that the whole show, army, civilians, nation have gone into the melting pot. The peace after the days of war will be as different to the old slack days of peace, as this War is. We are no longer a nation with an Army, the Army is the Nation and the nation its own Army. When the war is over, is it likely that the nation, which has been wrenched out of its groove and all unprepared had to make itself into a military power, will allow itself to slip back, into the old times of unpreparedness? I cannot believe it. When X. talks of being kicked out, the Army not wanting him any longer, I tell him that the Army is the Nation. "Very well then, the Government" he says, and whose servant is the Government? X.'s! and those like him. After the war we shall look to the men who are now commanding Batteries, Battalions, Companies working on the Staff, in the Navy, Munitions,

etc., to lead us. A soldier like X. we shall require as a soldier. The thinker, the idealist, the leader of the nation among other nations, we shall require in Parliament. Our best men we shall want on top, Whitehall, Downing Street, leading the Army and Navy according as they are fitted. We have got the material, we have now to see that it is used aright. I can see no place for the present M.P. (at least the ones one reads about) in my re-arrangement of the universe !—and now, will you please send me a pair of bed-room slippers ! More or less waterproof, at the bottom if possible, and sizey to allow of at least 2 pairs of socks. Heaps of love to Ada and yourself from CRICK.

30.10.16.

MY DEAR MAURICE

Comment ça marche, ce chose-là ? Here we are getting on—"swimmingly" ! It is a rough road, and an uphill one, but where there are hills there must be hill-tops, and from there one sees views. Consequently I am constantly seeing a sign-post far ahead at the cross roads of Fin de la Guerre. From it run many roads and paths, and the one marked "Army" will not be, I think, my choice, should I reach it. The element in the service with which I am in sympathy, will be leaving it, and I think it is quite on the cards I shall do so too, if there is anything like a decent job elsewhere, which there probably won't be. My ideal would be to put in 2 months' soldiering a year, to keep up to date, so that when danger threatens, one knows one's place and drops into it. I am blessed, I think, or perhaps cursed, with a certain amount of broadness and tolerance, which would go badly with the narrowness and short-sighted self-satisfaction

apparently inseparable from professional soldiering. In fact you have either to face the fact that it can't be done, or damn your intellect to eternal destruction. This is not the result of friction with Regular Soldiers, but the friction between them and such men as Carroll, Paterson, Millar, & Co. with whom I am in complete accord. I hate war, but of course war is inevitable. Some one goes under, that is the meaning of war, but I don't see why it should be us. We have got our big chance now, Conscription. I wonder if we are big enough to take it. The only way to prevent war is to have every sound minded and bodied man trained as a soldier, so that when the inevitable damned fool, like Germany, starts looking for trouble, every man drops into his place, and we are in a position to say "Now then, we and our friends are ready for you, if you want to fight and lose ¾ of the pick of your nation, we'll fight you." And after this show I don't think there'll be many takers. I suppose we shall have every comic crank in the country speaking against Conscription—and they will find people to listen to them. "War is wicked, civilised men should leave it to savages." Yes, but if you want to keep out of war, you've got to be able to fight better than anybody else. I hate the word "Conscription," it conjures up visions of dirty, ragged miserables being hounded on to their deaths. Why not call it "Patriotism." But any way let's have it. I have seen a little of Millar recently. He is attached to a Garrison Artillery Battery, pending getting a 9.2 Hows. of his own. Ye Gods of the Grotesque! Of course he is the same as ever. I wrote an idiotic letter to G. F. the other day, I wonder if he will get over the dislike to his own handwriting sufficiently to answer it. Brace up enough energy to write occasionally, do! Yrs.

C. C. C.

4.11.16.

DEAREST MUM

I hate my label. It is red, and on it is inscribed the stirring motto, 2nd Lt. C. C. Carver, R.F.A., C. of E. (From Birmingham). So would you get me a nice little silver identity disc, and on it let there be engraved, "2nd Lt. C. C. Carver, C. of E.," and on the other side—what you will, "Mizpah" or "This side up with care" or any little thing like that. How silly he is! Let there be a nice little chain to encircle his neck. After many blank days we received a mail to-day. Yours of 27th, 8, 9, the *Strand*, & one from Griffin. Things looked brighter, I don't say they didn't need it. I am living in hopes of another one ce soir. We continue to wallow along in the mud somehow. I must keep a bright look out for Edmund, I should certainly know him. I note that he defies all the laws of the censorship by putting his address at the top of the letter. Rash man! I fear I am not likely to be near the A.L.F. base. Carroll's brother is in these parts. I have been scouring the country side for him, & at last ran him to earth, about 500 yards away! I have had resort lately to Rudyard Kipling (this must stop, I am getting the "habit")! Do you know I don't think anybody has risen much above *Puck of Pook's Hill* and *Rewards and Fairies*. You must read them again. I have also been enjoying "Browning." You may remember that Beetle was always readin' an ass called Brownin', said Stalky! I like *Bishop Blougram's Apology* particularly. So glad our Francis is doing himself well. The Sgt.-Major (*loqui.*)—All ready—One?

Two?

Three? all ready Three?

Four? *FOUR!*

FE-E-E-E-D ! a mixed sound of turmoil, principally equine strife and excitement, and human expostulation.

The 6.30 evening feed. Will I out and see it? No, for I have just changed my boots. Ye Maile Yrs. of 25, 26, 30th ! I am so sorry the latter was such a blank day. One, a delightful one, from Humphrey which I enclose. It made me shriek. Heaps of love to Dad and Ada from

CRICK.

P.S.—I got the Buzzard cake and wrote to my Aunt K.

6.11.16.

DEAREST MUM

Merely a scrawl to-night, in acknowledgment of yours of 1st and 2nd, which arrived together, also *Punch*, *Bystander*, & *Pearson's*. Mott writes top-hole letters *when* he does. So spirituel. It is actually a fine moonlight night here. As I peer from the tent flaps, the sorely tried hills, woods, and valley have lost their war-worn look, & they are, as in the many peaceful autumns of old, but magic, with the thousand and one lights of man—and his huts. A large gun is being unkind to our little city of the leaning Lady. But one might as well throw stones at a tiger. This would seem to be all for to-night, & I will turn to *Punch* to liven up my flagging intellect. Heaps of love from CRICK.

P.S.—On second thoughts I am re-opening to enclose the 5th letter of my post. To me it cries out with an awful loneliness. I can't stand the idea of Mr. and Mrs. Speight being alone with their loss, and every now and then setting to work and on some pretext or another writing to me to try and get in touch again for a moment with the life from which they were so suddenly cut off. It gives the "Willies"

as T. Tembaron would say. So I have told them you would write to them occasionally to let them know how we are going along. I have purposely never told you about the sad part of the business, but as Carroll and I are the only ones who *know* the battery, all the correspondence with relatives comes on us. It is fearfully rending sometimes. I am far too imaginative, I fear, for I always seem to feel a part of what they feel. I was really awfully fond of this man Speight, who was always a great standby to me. He was such a fearless, honest, upright lad, and he wrote extraordinarily good letters home, telling them just exactly what he did, be it never so simple. He was killed on the 21st July, trying to dig out some of our men who had been buried by a shell. The letter I wrote to his people, in the first instance, appeared in the local paper and evidently was no little balm and satisfaction, for it was duly cut out and dispatched to me, per Gunner Taylor, Speight's neighbour in Adwalton, and inseparable friend since childhood. I feel sure you won't mind writing occasionally.

6.11.16.

My dear Dad

Many thanks for yours of the 31st. I paid a final visit to the man of dents on the 1st, and am now right as a trivet. I trust Mr. Hawkes was kind to you as he usually is. Awfully kind of Mrs. Kenrick to send the gloves, I will write to-day. I wonder if bad weather ever had such far-reaching effects. We, the division that is, have a very personal interest in the "push." For did we not help to start it off, and have we not seen most of its biggest strides ? So that dud weather is very depressing. We are still waiting, and I am still at the Wagon line. Millar came over to see me the

other day, and yesterday I sloshed over on "Bulgy" to return his call. I was delighted to hear he was to get a battery of "heavies," which will mean a month or so at home we hope. He showed me round the gigantic Howitzers which reside in these parts. I had never seen a 15″ at close quarters before, and was duly impressed. I do hope Maurice will be able to go to Oxford. As you say it will be ripping for us all. I fear this is a very stupid letter, but have not yet recovered from censoring the Sunday crop. Love from

CHRISTIAN.

10.11.16.

DEAREST MUM

Thanks so much for the consignment of gateaux (the pre-glove one) & your letters (the last was just after you got back from Rugby). I am enjoying *Miss Esperance and Mr. Wycherly.* We are still waiting on the weather. I expect we shall be going back for a rest in the near future, and then I sincerely trust leave will open. We are all a bit stale & tired, but cheerful, thank heaven for a cheerful crowd! How extraordinary it will feel to get back, we have got so used to the noise that one will feel lost without it. These long nights are very noisy. Bangs, crashes, traffic, all manner of shouting & so forth. Then there's Ernest, a Ger. gun who fires at colossal ranges (tickles up Corps H.Qs. & that sort of thing)—he sometimes shoots us. And Percy, our quite particular Zeppelin, a great fellow—and *very* elusive. I saw a terrific fire (with explosions) the other night. A French dump, you may have read about it. I doubt if there has ever been such a sight in the world before. (Percy is suspected.) I had a ride in a Tank last night (until ejected). Most enthralling.

The mail is up. I wait. I feel much more like reading than writing letters to-night. None for me,—Strafe! Heaps of love from CRICK.

13.11.16.

DEAREST MUM

Thanks so much for your letter, and the slippers, bedroom officer's pairs one, and cakes etc.

The weather has at last consented to be kind while we administer an upper cut. I was frightfully tired coming back last night, having had no sleep the night before, and done a lot of trudging along sticky trenches during the day.

Suddenly, a voice—"Good Evening."

I—"Evening."

Voice—"Just come down from er—?"

(This, a leading question based on the appearance of my clothes.)

I—"Yes. ————." (And the usual patter one administers after an attack.)

Voice—"Going far? Care for a cup of cocoa?"

I—"Oh well!—it's awfully good of you!"

Voice—"Come along in."

The voice revealed itself to be a Major of "heavies." (R.G.A.) Cocoa led to biscuits, biscuits to shrimp paste, and so on to cakes and chocolate, till I had supped heavily, chatting the while. Finally we proceeded on our ways which lay together for a bit.

The Major—"May I know whom I have had the honour of entertaining?"

I—"My name's Carver—ever meet a Major Creswell, R.G.A.?" (This is a stock feeler.)

The Major—"Yes, had a lot to do with him at one time, and he was in my term at the shop. His people were at Shoebury when I was there, awfully pretty girls, his sisters, what's the name of the eldest one, that Tall girl? and the second one,—she used to be called Hatless. He is a staff bird now of great magnificence."

I (somnolently)—"Yes—nearly all married now, one in Canada, one in Egypt,—er—one in Ceylon—India—"

The Major—"What part of Canada—know a lot of people out there—Oh! British Columbia—I knew a Captain in the Navy who went out there, married a girl, came home and commanded a flotilla of mine-sweepers."

I (Great Scotland! he must be a wizard or something, who lures in lonely wayfarers with offers of cocoa)—"What was his name?"

The Major—"Kemp!—Well, good-night to you and good luck."

Thinking it over this morning when I awoke (having been called fourteen times) I came to the conclusion the whole thing was rather weird. Heaps of love from

CHRISTIAN.

14th November 1916.

MY DEAR DAD

So many thanks for your letter and for the Arctic socks and writing materials. I am still at the Wagon Line, but was down with the Infantry for the big show yesterday. I went down the night before last at about 9 P.M. and the show came off early yesterday morning. The Battalion I was working with (Sherwood Foresters) did absolutely splendidly, they attacked with 350 men, got everything

they wanted, and took no less than 400 prisoners. A bloodless defeat for the Bosche (at least I never saw any dead), almost unprecedented I should think.—Of course the circumstances were rather unique, the Bosche was up in a fearful salient, made by the river. I was up in the captured village some three hours after it was taken, to find out about things, and it was most fascinating to go over the ground we have shot at, and studied for the last month and a half. They had some splendid dugouts there to the best of which I laid a wire in the afternoon and settled in. It is a sort of underground town, and must have been made from nitrate shafts in the first instance.—A maze of passages about 30 ft. under with nice little bedrooms for officers and bunks for the men. In the centre the "mess," a tastefully furnished apartment, a pretty paper and the inevitable Jap. lacquer work on the walls, oil-painting, carpet, electric light (as everywhere). When the Infantry went in, it presented the usual appearance of hasty abandonment. Breakfasts half eaten, food still cooking on the stoves.—One gent had been having a light wine with his breakfast—the Colonel (of Sherwoods) being thirsty, thought he would like a glass too, and not till he had drunk it off did he discover it was neat whiskey out of the wrong bottle! I never knew the hun drank it, did you? You can imagine the hilarious lunch—everyone drinking champagne and smoking the best Bosche cigars. The bedroom I selected was a picture of neatness. The late owner's steel helmet and gas mask neatly hung up, a half-smoked cigarette on the table, his book still open at the place he left off.—The only fly in the ointment was a message to say that if we wanted, the Brigade H.Q. would send up a prisoner who knew the location of the mine under the dugout! "At once please" was the answer.

I came back here last night as owing to certain changes I was not wanted any more. The 400 prisoners were a great source of entertainment while they lasted. They came down about 50 at a time in charge of two or three men—all very cheerful, thoroughly satisfied with their lot, and only too ready to talk, being Saxons. In fact, the only people who were not pleased were the officers, who were *not* Saxons.

I had a good look round a tank the other day. It came past the Wagon Line and as the door was open I hopped aboard. Examined everything, and exit just as it struck the crew that I was rather de trop.

I believe there has been a little leave round here, but mostly "special." I trust it will open properly for our Division shortly, and that I shall be able to get home in the Xmas Hols. Much love from CHRISTIAN.

16.11.16.

DEAREST MUM

I was so awfully sorry to hear from Aunt Fanny that you were laid up. I don't like these internal chills, however slight. Get well, with all possible speed won't you? We are still hanging on here, but expect to go out for a rest shortly. The wind has gone round through West and North to East and I think it means snow, for it is exceeding chillsome in my wig-wam (camouflaging gives it that appearance) without a brazier which is seldom absent. Poor old "Arabia," it is very hard lines. Thank God we have the wretched German by the throat, we and France, and well he knows it. Heaps of love from CRICK.

16.11.16.

My dear Maurice

Thanks so much for your letter. So glad there is a chance of your doing something at Oxford. I am very much hoping you will be able to have a jolly good time there—so that I shall be able to have one by proxy. "My frater at Oxford you know" sort of idea. I had a very nice reply from G. F. the other day, in which he said you were a great standby to him, but "that like all the Carvers, he is too conscious of the mote in his own eye, to realize that most other people have a beam in theirs, or to be really happy, etc." He is a wonderfully perceptive old bird, for that just hits off you and I to a T. Whenever I came across difficulties in my work, or did a rotten bad prep. I used to be apprehensive and depressed, and I expect you are the same. In time I came to realize that I had a brain as good as the average, and that what was difficult for me was difficult for others, and real work generally brought one on top. In exams, for instance, when I was depressed at having done badly, it usually turned out that others had done worse; one only did badly when one thought one had done well. In an exam, the only thing you have got to fear is nervousness, and that can be overcome by seeing things in their proper proportions. But above all, old bird, try and be happy, particularly while you have such excellent opportunities. The power of being cheerful is worth much fine gold, and it helps on others no end. Without it no man can attain to leadership, whether in thought or in deed. And leadership, each in our own degree, is what we are put here for after all. I don't know what you feel about what is called—with a sort of semi-aversion—religion. I find in this sort of job, that I have to pray, and pray good and hard, otherwise one could not keep

going. One must look up, and the God one looks up to, is a God of Hope, and the Kingdom, a Kingdom of Light and happiness. Consciously or unconsciously, one always pictures Heaven, and I always find myself apt to slip into an idea of a sanctified place, with harps and wings and things floating about, illuminated by a sort of incandescent white light. But when you are struggling along, through foot-deep sticky mud, and there are shells bursting on the path in front of you, and behind you, and unpleasantly close to you, and corpses lying about, then when you pray, you think of all the happiness and beauty you have ever known, and get a closer conception. Wherefore, oh, my brother, be happy for it is your job. I will now slack off this jaw, to read the mail, beginning with a letter from you. Thanks so much for it. I shouldn't think of telling anybody that scholarship is not your line, because I have abundant proof that it is. I am delighted to hear about Symmond's sermon, I wish I knew him for I am sure we should have a very similar outlook. How people do hate home truths, especially the type of Rugby parent. Yours,

C. C. CARVER.

21.11.16.

MY DEAREST MUM

Mille pardons for being such a rotten poor correspondent, but life has been moderately busy these last days. Brown has departed to Boulogne with an interesting complaint called Myalgia, which entails a treatment of terrific electric shocks. The Captain has a cold, Carroll has a cold, Ismay is in bed with "flu," the Sergeant Major ditto—I have

no cold. There you have it. We are still hanging on, and are beginning to think that we must have taken permanent root here. However, as the prophet says, we shall see. I have removed into a hut, quite a good one. The first night in, there was an Easterly gale, and it snowed. It blew under the eaves, so that self and clothes were buried under a drift. La Guerre. My old enemy indigestion has been making tentative efforts towards an offensive, but the bottle of medicine which I have treasured since last May, has counter-attacked it successfully. *Mr. Britling* is certainly a wonderful book. I agree with all that Wells says, and especially his ideas about God. I can't find it in me to dislike the individual German, and I am very certain I dislike killing him. An excellent number of Blackwood's, the last. Everybody ought to read Blackwood. Well, I must awa' and draw bullion for the battery, and will continue later.

Nothing further to report. The road is even worse than usual, but quite as interesting. Would you send me another bottle of that medicine. Bags of love from

CRICK.

22.11.16.

MY DEAR DAD

Boredom is our portion. Nearly 12 weeks on the Somme is pretty nearly a record,—and quite long enough. For the last month we have been on the verge of going out for a rest, but owing to the weather delaying the last 2 attacks, it has been put off and put off, till we are getting unutterably fed up. And a really good growl like this is

the only relief. When we do go out, we are going to quite a nice place I believe, far from the noise of battle, and it makes it all the more tantalising. A modern Dante would certainly introduce it as a torture in Hades—men condemned to walk eternally round a maze of pathways, each 1 foot under sticky mud, 17″ shells bursting here and there, and at every other corner a rumour that they were to be removed to the fields of Elysium, the day after tomorrow—always the day after tomorrow! Just censored a paltry 50 letters or so. It is a terrible thing to have charge of 90 souls, as I have, who are all prolific letter writers. Whenever I enter my hut thinking how nice it will be to sit in front of the stove with a cigar, there, on some prominent object, is a huge pile of letters. Ugh! The grizzly business of licking, the mental paralysis entailed. You will be amused to hear I smoke nothing but cigars now, lots of them. French cigars of an unspeakable rankness. When we get out I shall have a perfect orgy of good cigars. I grow more and more certain that the army is no place for me after the war. I wonder if one would have a chance of getting into some administrative job, the political department in India for example. I suppose there would be all sorts of impossible exams in the way. I think it fitting to enclose this missive in a yellow envelope. Symbolic. Thanks very much for the blocks etc. In spite of everything time seems to slip by extraordinarily quickly, one day is exactly like another. I arise about 9 A.M. Why get up earlier? I retire about 10, and go to sleep punctually at 11.30. The intervening 1 and a half hours is spent in a few thoughts on the war, and a study of the numerous gun flashes, and listening to the trains. There is nothing so homelike as a sound of trains. A railway runs past my

front (and only) door. Before the last "push" trains crept furtively up it, squawking feebly, indicating that the driver's natural impulse to whistle fiercely on every occasion, was curbed by the fear of being heard by the none too distant huns. But now they are quite aggressively brave. Notice boards have appeared announcing that "25 miles" "24 & a half," "24," there the line ends,—how disappointing! In consequence of all this I nearly always dream about trains. I am in a train from Bristol going home, I am in a train with the family returning from some Summer holiday.

"Stables." I must begone. Love from CHRISTIAN.

22.11.16.

MY DEAR HUMPHREY

Thanks beaucoup for your last. Life wags evenly here, and we do an attack about once a week or so. I am looking after our horses at the moment, and living in a tin hut, which is more comfortable than it looks. There is much mud. Glad you welted Bruton. I wonder if you are as sick of Somersetshire as M. and I were, when it came to our time to leave. You will enjoy Rugby immensely. I ran across a man to-day, who went to Rugby the same term that I did, was in the same form with me the whole time I was there, and went to the "Shop" with me. He has been 14 months out here and had no leave, and is now off to do A.D.C. to a General on the Army Staff, which is some compensation. We had rather a jolly railway accident here this evening. A military railway runs past here, and it crosses the main road by a level crossing.

There was a fearful scrum of motor traffic, and a big Leyland lorry was right on the crossing. Two heavy trucks loaded with timber, got fed up with their engine somewhere up the line and departed on their own. As the gradient is down hill they were doing 40 miles p.h. when they reached us. Shouts. Whistles.—BIFF — Sparks, Yells. Na-poo Leyland lorry! A horrid mess but the man in the lorry was only slightly hurt. Yrs. C. C. C.

25.11.16.

My dearest Mum

Je vous remercie mille fois pour les vôtres de 12, 14, 16 and 19. And that I am a miserable fellow for not doing so before. It rains, steadily, monotonously, hopelessly, cruelly, exasperatingly it rains. But I, have I not a warm hut? We may expect a change (*i.e.* a move) about the 2nd of next month I believe. Sad days for the Battery. Our corporate existence is all too soon to come to an end, for we are to be split up, in accordance with a new scheme of redistribution. What our (the officers') fate may be, heaven knows. I am much hoping that Paterson will get a battery, in which case I shall do my best to get with him. Failing that I should like to get to Capt. B. Nous verrons. I am so sorry you had a chill at Burnham, what mouldy fortune. I hear there are chances of leave when we get out, I sincerely hope so. Civilised bed, unlimited baths! I have a longing to read Kipps again, would you dispatch him. Heaps of love from Crick.

26.11.16.

My dear Dad

Thanks awfully for your letter of the 21st. Yes the papers arrive regularly and are most thoroughly appreciated all round. We are still ——).)* * ! ! ! ?—— sometime I SUPPOSE. And the weather has been unspeakable these last 2 days, and on top of it all we are to be split up, after all this time together. The only thing to do is to smile and look as if one enjoyed it, and use bags of tact all round. That much, at least I have learnt. I need hardly say everybody's future movements are very uncertain. I have had need to defend my "shack" of late. This is understandable, because I have no shadow of right here, I just pinched the place. It is all a matter of "nerve." Thus—if someone bursts in and says, "OH, Hullo! I thought these places were empty, been told to come here—but I suppose you are one of the Canadians?" (Obviously the best thing to be anyhow) so—"Sure thing" in a nasal twang is the correct reply. But I was very nearly out at 7 A.M. this morning—very nearly—and it was *POURING* with rain. The bosche had been making a nuisance of himself with long distance shell at 5.30 and on, and at 7 I was very much asleep indeed. Gradually I became aware that the door was open, and some one was saying, "Good morning!" aggressively—several times—"he said it very loud and clear." He came and—I sat up. "I say," said the enemy, "hate disturbing you and all that, but you'll have to clear out, I have orders to occupy these huts. I've got to get 800 men in, they'll be here in 5 minutes." "Ah!" (did I mention that it was raining?) I got to work. The hut was given me by the division—very well by the corps then—the Army Commander personally handed it over to me, and told me

to give it up to no-one below the rank of Viceroy—my name was Haig and I was the nephew of Sir Douglas. All of no avail, and I must clear out. But this evening I am still in possession and a little wooden cross marks the last resting place of the would-be occupant. And 2 years ago I couldn't have done that you know! You remember at the beginning of October I told you we were alongside a prisoners' cage? I enclose a photo of same from the *Bystander*. The other enclosure is also culled from the *Bystander* and represents my idea of the only kind of gun the enemy should be allowed to use, 3/6 at Gamage's! Now to bed, almost subconsciously arranging steel helmet (German), gum boots, cardigan, pencil, candle, matches, where they will be nearest to hand. Or as more often happens, where I can knock the greatest number on the floor with my first frantic leap. Good night, and heaps of love to all from CHRISTIAN.

28.11.16.

DEAREST MUM

The land is a wilderness of mud, liquid, stinking mud. So much for the earth, the air is fog. Great ravens (or are they only autumnal crows) flap over the desolation croaking grimly of rheums and all winter ills. We were all ready to move back yesterday, to a better land, and in the evening we got the inevitable message telling us that everything was cancelled, we were not going out yet. Ye little Gods of mire and strife, who wouldn't be a soldier? At times like these one feels bitter against the "great uncombed," whose fault it is that the willing horses of Britain's chariot must be thus over-driven. The whole Fact of the matter

is that I have a cold in the head! Do you remember Baldwin? I went to Rugby with him, was in the same form during our whole sojourn there, and went to the shop with him. There was some talk of his coming to us for a night first. I met him the other day at that Charing X of the battle front, the residence of the field cashier. He was looking thin and ill after 14 months of Egypt and the Somme without leave. He was just off to do A.D.C. to a General, by way of a rest, and hoped to be home for Xmas. A great lad, Baldwin, one takes him up just where one left him. Do not address me A/83 R.F.A. till I let you know. So sorry you were seedy at Burnham—sickening I call it. I did not quite place the Belgian Mrs. M. Do you remember Tubby at E.P.S. used to make us pronounce Belgique—Belle jigger. Heaps of love to Ada an' a' from

CRICK.

P.S.—What a life!

7.12.16.

CHÈRE MAMAN

C'est fini—we rest. Myself and section now grace A/83 making them up to a 6 gun battery. I toddled over to them on the 3rd, spent the night there, and we marched on the 4th. There is nothing I enjoy more than the life of camp and caravan. Days on the road, full of incident and humour, and nights in villages—with beds for the astute. Our first day on the road was one of God's own. Up at 4 A.M. and out of camp just as it was getting light, and on and away from the mud. We have done well and have lots of "good chits" from Army Commanders and such, but we have no laurels, we are merely muddy and

tired. All of 25 miles the first day, and on awful roads. Arrived at our destination for the night, no horse lines available. Bon, we will camp out in the street. Up go the lines, off comes the harness, what matter if the inhabitants are barred from ingress and egress, and that the whole population decamp in indignation to the town Major. We are partaking of coffee and rolls in a lordly billet. The 2nd day was a good one. Nice country and a good village at the end of it. And the morrow was the third day and nous voici. Quite a good house and we should be very comfortable. I have vague hopes of leave in the Xmas hols. Heaps of love from CRICK.

14.12.16.

MA CHÈRE MAMAN

Je vous remercie mille fois pour votre lettres, les livres, les gateaux et tout autre chose. We are immensely enjoying our rest, to the exclusion of all cares and worries. Bath, shop, and be merry, for to-morrow—the mud. I think we are pretty certain to go back to the same old place. I cannot tie the Bde. H.Q. to giving me any information as to when my leave will be likely to fall due. I think it may be somewhere towards the end of the holidays, in which case the brethren must take a few days extra, as it quite spoils a leave to have people going back in the middle of it. I hope old Mott does something good in his exam: he certainly deserves it. Change is in the air, one feels we are about to turn over the page on a new chapter. The new Government is thoroughly supported out here, England is getting moving at last. And Germany? She has published to all the world the fact that she too has

reached a turning point, that hereafter there must be a change. 1917 looms black for Germany, she cannot gain anything, and lose she must. At the moment she holds all that she gained when at the top of the wave. What more natural than that she should try and close the game with such an array of points to her credit, particularly as her hand is so alarmingly weak. And what of the hungry souls in Germany, and the weary desperate soldiery in France, when the Peace that they have longed and prayed for, the victorious peace they have been promised, is refused. Change . . . (as H. G. W. would put it).

Will you please send me my "British Warm," I can no longer get on without it. Tons of love to Ada, Dad, and all from CRICK.

17.12.16.

CHÈRE MARRAINE

Thank you so very much for the charming present. I am bewitched by Arthur Rackham, and in any case Rip Van Winkle is simply irresistible. We are "out" for a short rest, and are very much enjoying it. We are quite close to a fair-sized town (portrait enclosed) where there are quite good shops. *BUT* the weather is really terribly unkind, not so much to us as to our poor hard-worked old horses. One wishes that a "rest" meant warm stables for them, instead of about 2 feet of mud. What thrilling times we live in—I believe Germany will go a lot further than most people think to get peace. Ever yours CHRISTIAN.

20.12.16.

MY DEAR DAD

Thanks so much for your letter of the 12th. Best season-

able wishes, and thanks so much (you and Mum) for the generous present to the men, which is most acceptable. I fear my leave will fall between Jan. 10th and 20th, but I am sure the boys could get a few days extra. It makes all the difference and one never knows when one will get another chance. We all feel, we should like a look in at some other theâtre de guerre, one feels a trifle fed up with France at times. On the other hand the Balkans, as they figure in the *Daily Mirror*, look most forbidding.

T. O. L. from C. C. C. *P.S.*—I have just fixed up my leave for the 8th Jan. (10 days leave), though it is always liable to be postponed a day or two. AM tag!

20.12.16.

DEAREST MUM

Did I really never acknowledge ye disque? how perfectly disgusting of me, I think it is "a joy for ever." Life flows along pleasantly enough—I had an excellent dinner with Carroll in town yesterday. I am reading a lot—O' Henry. I much enjoyed *Manalive* by G. K. Chesterton (such delightful nonsense) *The Research Magnificent* by Wells, I have just finished the first Vol.—and (I blush)—Raffles. Q'.s foolish young remarks about the new ministry goaded me to fury. Will you please ask him from me, to read Lord Wolseley's *Maxims*, as I imagine he wishes to become a soldier for the moment or something approaching one. If he means what he says he is disloyal to his leaders, if not he is mischievously futile. And save us from a man without a sense of humour. Here's the very best wishes for a joyous Christmas and a New Year full of hope. L. G.'s Speech yesterday was first chop I thought and a real nasty knock for Mr. Fritz Hollweg. Heaps of love to all from CRICK.

28.12.16.

My most beloved Ma

How topping about M., when does he go there? How well M. H. and F. seem to fit in. F. has one term with H., H. one term with M. The only discordant note is C. C. C. who invariably comes on leave at the wrong moment. Piles of love from C. C. C.

28.12.16.

My dear Maurice

Frightful enthusiasm (restricted perhaps) about the exhibloggins. I was given to understand, however, that it was quite absurd your going up, that you hadn't the faintest chance of getting anything. Never again shall I believe your statements on such subjects, and what after all is an exhibloggins compared to that! We have only 3 more days in this dear old spot, we have had a short rest, but a gay one. I have enjoyed it thoroughly. If only the gentle skrimshanker had come forward earlier life would be quite tolerable, say 2 months in the line, and 3 weeks out and so on. But 3 or 4 months is so heart-breaking. I have great hopes of getting away about the 10th, for my leave. We are having another concert on the 30th, which ought to be amusing. Thine, in all dullness C. C. Carver.

[*Note.*—Maurice had been up to Oxford to try for a scholarship and had got an Exhibition at Corpus Christi College, Oxford.]

1.1.17.

MY DEAR DAD

A very happy New Year to you and the best of luck. Expect me lateish on the 5th, weather, tides, and submarines being equal. Had dinner in town last night, and in company with Rowbotham and Pinhey saw the New Year in at a very excellent French comic operetta (a nasty word) by Offenbach. Simply splendid music and singing. I don't suppose this will reach you in time, so I will try and wire later. Does it ever stop raining in this part of the world? We sometimes wonder with a dull apathy whether it rains like this in Peace time, or is it merely a woeful spite on the part of the weather. Heaps of love from CRICK.

"Abbeville, Somme, 2*nd Jan.* 1917.
"Carver, Harborne, Birmingham.
"Probably arriving on Thursday 4th. CARVER."

Third Leave.

Jan. 18, 1917.

Christian arrived home on leave Jan. 4th, 1917. We were having tea in the morning-room, the post-maid rang the bell, the letters were being got in, which prevented us from hearing Christian's taxi arrive, and he took us all by surprise, walking in at the side-door. A great shout from the boys and in he came. We all sat down to tea, feeling joyful at having him really there at last. He jumped up from his tea. "Wait a minute," he said, and came back with a funny small brown canvas bag in his hand, French, out of which he proceeded to hand us each a present. A set of tablets in white metal for me to hang on my watch-

chain, a match-box of the same metal for his Father, a present for Ada, something for everybody. "And I got them all for 15 francs," he said, "bag and all, in Abbeville" (Christian's forte not having been economy he thought *this* time he would be commended).

He and I went to tea with the Napier Claverings one evening. As we walked there he talked about the last six months. The autumn months had undoubtedly been trying, the weary warfare, the outlook very grey and unending. Probably, too, it was a reaction from the Somme, the high hopes held before the attack in July. But November and December still found conditions much the same.

The D'Oyley Carte Company was in Birmingham then. Gilbert and Sullivan's operas were being given; Christian thoroughly enjoyed them. He and the brothers went often with their Father. He went to one, "The Gondoliers," with Mrs. Steven the night after he arrived, as it happened to be one the boys had just seen. We went up to tea with Mrs. Kenrick that afternoon and hurried back for him to have an early meal with Mrs. Steven here. One Friday a large party mustered to go to see "Pinafore"—the Arch. Kenricks and the Napier Claverings. They all came back to tea at Harborne House. The pianola was played away at harder than ever, reeling out "The Mikado," "The Yeoman of the Guard," "The Gondoliers," etc.

Hester Pinsent and Joan Kenrick came to dinner one night, and we played games afterwards.

Maurice was to take a photograph of Humphrey one day. I thought him like the picture of Lord Glenelg, and he was to put on his old snuff-coloured silk coat and stand in the same position. All preparations were duly made, even the roll he is seen to have on the table labelled "Ireland" was

copied. Maurice took up his stand in the drawing-room window with Humphrey opposite to him. But all this did not happen without a good deal of argument of a heated family nature; we each had our own views as to what line to pursue to secure the likeness. Maurice, anyhow, got *his* way, which was to aim the camera at Lord Glenelg's stomach, so that the haughty look which Humphrey assumed was entirely lost, as it was somewhere behind the lordly chin, which came out with great prominence. When the argument was at its most heated Christian intervened, addressing me with his "very much Battery C.O. manner," hand outstretched. "One moment, if you please," he said majestically. Francis appeared in the room, having been arrayed by Ada in the *little* sea-green silk trousers and coat worn by Lord Glenelg as a boy; garments which were enough to make the most philosophical child peevish, for tight they were, and when one talks of Francis having been *arrayed* in them it is understating the case, unless the action with which you ram a very large pillow into a very small pillow-case can be called "arraying." Francis is *not* a very philosophical child, and the effect on him was certainly not conducive to serenity. Especially when he realised that there was no room for him to be photographed in as he desired and hoped, the window being completely filled up by all the rest of his family, who seemed to be hard at it arguing. By the time the family had settled their differences, it was too tearful a little Charles Grant to be worth making permanent. And also he wouldn't be done. Some rather fetching ones of Christian were taken in the old coat.

Christian enjoyed poking about in Cornish's and Hudson's book-shops. I can see him now browsing among some beautifully-illustrated books at Cornish's, finally bearing

away an enormous gold and white tome, *The Bells* (Edgar Allan Poe) illustrated by Dulac, only a foot square! "Just taking home a little brochure," he said with a twinkle.

At the Napier C.'s having charades one evening after dinner, Alan was to be seen keeping a book-stall, Christian as a book buyer strolls in and asks for "The Manual of an Elastic Conscience." The audience wondered why they hadn't all asked for such a useful work before. We missed Tim and Mark during this leave. Tim was with the Worcestershire Hussars and Mark was a Sapper now and on his way to Mesopotamia. Tim had left just before Christian arrived, which seemed such a pity. Maurice had done a good deal of farewell junketing with Tim; in fact felt quite worn out when Christian first arrived. C. C. C. got himself a nice grey suit with a green stripe, which he looked very well in. He was due to leave on a Saturday, and there had been some talk of Maurice and Humphrey going up to London and seeing him off; but hotels were full and trains were few, and it was not easy to manage, so it was given up. Christian took the disappointment of not having the brothers with him wonderfully well. He went off smilingly and cheerful as usual, his Father and the boys seeing him off. His friend Mr. Bowman had secured a room for him at the "Berners Hotel." He was there himself, which made it very pleasant for Christian, and I shall always feel grateful to him for giving him such a good send-off.

14.1.17.
R.P. Hotel, Folkestone.

DEAREST MUM

Just a line while we wait, to let you know that all is well so far. I reached town well up to time, and found the

Berners without much difficulty, quite a decent room. Went to Victoria and booked a seat and breakfast on the Pullman for to-day, and then met Bowman at the Troc ; frightfully crowded, people standing behind every table. So as Tempus fuged, we had to go to Lyons opposite. Thence by Taxi to the Gaiety, where we met B——'s sister and Cousin, both very nice girls. An excellent show, "Theodore and Co.," very witty and amusing, and good music. It lasted from 8 till about 11.15, when we tubed to Berners. Retired to rest 12.30, arose from rest 5.30 (with groans). Sunday morning so nothing available. Started to walk with another unfortunate (Major R.A.M.C.). I was just beginning to realise how much I disliked walking when we picked up a taxi in Shaftesbury Avenue and so got to Victoria in comfortable time. Had a good breakfast and am now in front of a fire in the Lounge of this yere Hostelry (9.15 A.M.) The ship sails at 11.30 and we ought to have a smooth crossing. I shall probably get to Abbeville sometime this afternoon, and leave for the line 4.20 A.M. to-morrow. It has been a simply topping good leave, and I have no regrets whateffer, except that it did not last longer. I don't seem to have had an un-enjoyable moment. Bon-alors !

CRICK.

17.1.7.
Wednesday.

DEAREST MUM

Me voici arrive ! But oh ! the miseries of travelling on the so-called trains of this benighted country. We got to the French port at about mid-day (same place as I came by) where I learnt that my train did not go till 9 A.M. the next day. Got a room at a Hotel and spent the remainder of a

rather dull Sunday, with the same Major R.A.M.C. with whom I had travelled from the Berners. We simply crawled next day, and it was excruciatingly cold. By a superb and final effort we got to the base near which we were before, dusk and the train drawing in nearly neck and neck. Spent Monday night there. Caught a 4.40 A.M. train on Tuesday. This we accomplished with some ease as it did not actually start till 11.30 A.M. Reached railhead at about 10 P.M. and spent the remainder of an uncomfortable night there. No lorries were going the right way to-day so had to walk to W.L. Latter is in quite a nice place, which is satisfactory, as if we are here any length of time we shall all do a turn there. Rowbotham is now on leave. I seem to have evaded some unpleasant days from a climatic point of view. Going up to battery to-morrow. Heaps of love to all from

CRICK.

Back at the war.

19.1.17.

MY DEAR DAD

Behold me back in the abomination of desolation. I rode up from the Wn Line in a snowstorm yesterday morning. Things are still pretty rough up here—the mess is small, to put it mildly, and my sleeping dug out has 6 inches or so of mud & water on the floor. There is a lot of snow lying & it is pretty chillsome, but one soon gets into it. We shall probably get about 5 days in every 3 weeks at the Wn Line, which is a good scheme as the W. L. is on the outskirts of civilisation. I had a glorious leave, the memory of which will help me to carry on for many a long day. One always hears people coming back from leave asking "Is it worth it"? I can never

understand that attitude. A well trained memory, like mine, should be the sun dial of life, and only tell the sunlit hours. I wonder when my next one will come. Heaps of love from CRICK.

To Maurice.

22.1.17.

Hail Brother. How is it with the republic and particularly with the latest chick from the old blop. Thanks much for yours of the 16th. *Rewards and Fairies* is even better than *Puck of P. H.*, they are my two favourite books, I don't believe anything more charming has ever been written. It was pretty mouldy getting back to the War again. I had 3 nights in France, en route and one at the Wagon Line. I got back to the "obi" (plural of "obu" French for shell) in the middle of a snow storm, and found my quarters were a soggy little unfinished dug out. It came upon me with force that this is a terrible war—a very terrible war. However, now things are looking brighter, and one takes more interest in biffing, or being biffed, by Boches. They are pretty liberal with their 5.9.'s here abouts, but most of it is promiscuous-like. We are not doing very much work, as this frost and snow have held for about a fortnight, and digging is temporarily in abeyance. How is Hump settling in—I pity his study companion with coils of Humphrey all round him. Yrs., Christian.

22.1.17.

MY DEAR DAD

Just a line to let you know that things are looking distinctly brighter, and to enclose the letter to Uncle A. We get a good deal of shelling here, but have got a good little

dug out, and are comfortably fixed up. I don't think I have ever enjoyed anything so much as this leave, it really was simply tophole. Love from CHRISTIAN.

22.1.17.

DEAREST MUM

How's things? I do hope the chill is better, and that this horrible polar weather isn't hitting you too hard. Quant à nous, things are much brighter, it has stopped snowing, and we have moved into a better dugout. I rather fear some of your letters have proceeded to the occident, for the only thing I have had yet is one from M., H., F., dated 16th. I wonder if you got mine from Folkestone, they didn't mention it. Enter the mail, 3 from you, post marked 13th, 14th, 17th. Nous verrons. The 13th was really 15th. I much preferred the day Nursery to the spare room. I think the house is far and away nicer as it is now. It *IS* a comfortable house. Just received my coat and sock parcel. This won't reach you till you are at Heddon's Gate—but I should certainly have pushed on, if you could get anything to take you. You will be interested to hear that last night I dined with Mrs. N. C. and Wog in the club at A——, from the windows of which we got an excellent view of the local ruins here. "Yes, that's P——," I found myself remarking "*A NICE* place." "Why what's the matter with it?" said Wog. "It's infernally unhealthy" I replied emphatically—and woke to hear a sound like a gigantic train followed by a crash in the neighbourhood of the selfsame ruins. I have bags of letters to write so I must shut off. Heaps of love to Ada and Dad (No you won't be there!) from

CRICK.

27.1.17.

MY DEAR DAD

I have dined, the stove is at last emitting sufficient heat to keep body and soul together. Scotti (or some one) is singing "Oh, Star of Eve" per the gramophone, I am smoking a Corona (in war time too!), wherefore this is temporarily not too bad a war. And I am probably much more contented than some 75% of the population of the B. I. (British Isles I thought perhaps I ought to tell you). Isn't that a beautiful thought! But this weather is really—well isn't it? We had 50 degrees of frost the other night—or so Pinhey's Max. & Min. thermometer said. I believe the meteorological department have not yet accepted it as "gospel." Sometime when you are in town I should be awfully grateful if you would look in at Dale & Forty's or somewhere, and get a gramophone selection from "Pinafore" and one from "The Yeoman." I particularly want the opening song from the latter. We find this snow glare very trying to the eyes—particularly when you have observing to do, and then come back to a dug out lighted by one candle, which has to "shed its feeble beam" through masses of tobacco and other smoke. Love from CHRISTIAN.

27.1.17.

MY VERY DEAREST MUM

Heddon country must be very desolate this weather. Quel froid, some snap, n'est-ce pas? We are all managing to keep pretty cheery here, and warm most of the time. There is one great advantage about this frost—one does keep dry. We had 25 degrees of frost one night, what is your lowest? I have received all my coats and boots things O.K., so am all right now. This destroyer scrap seems to have been a nasty little cut at the hun, or so one hopes. I did

my first Liaison (this trip) the day before yesterday, and spent yesterday in the line doing some observing. It is *THE* most amazing country, practically no trenches, because if either side dig a trench, the opposite side promptly flatten it out with Artillery. You just float about the open and the hun does the same. I had a better day than I expected, as I ran across 2 cheery souls who gave me breakfast and lunch. We have got an Infantry subaltern with us for a week (in order to show him that gunners like everybody else *DO* have their little trials) by name Osborne ; he was at St. Paul's, knew some of the Mitchells, and especially Philip, whom he enquired after eagerly, and wished to be remembered to. So next time you are writing, per chance you would do so ? We have seen 3 hun planes brought down in 2 days. One of them was a most thrilling sight. In another the 2 men were captured unhurt. Their feeble excuse (for they were very obviously driven down by 2 of our planes) was that they thought they were landing in their own lines. Had this really been the case, it is a trifle obscure why they shoved their maps and papers through the ice in a shell hole, and then fired the plane ! On being taken, the pilot, a fearful nut, asked if "These was not German trenches, no ? " which was greeted with a chorus of "they were once, old man, they were once ! " It is a curious feeling (can it be done ?)—there is a curious feeling about walking, comparatively safely, over the country where one had such narrow shaves last September. I am getting the "one" habit. You remember the great lady in *The Knight on Wheels* who says "One feels it is so nice for one to meet one's relations' friends, doesn't one ? " and Philip tries desperately to fathom it. Please give my very best love to Aunt Fanny. H.O.L. to you from CRICK.

27.1.17.

MY DEAR ADA

Thanks most awfully for sending off all my things, they have all arrove now. It is wonderful what hardships we brave lads learn to bear,—just look at my kit for instance: 1 British warm, 2 Trench coats, 1 mackintosh, 3 tunics, 2 prs field boots, 2 pairs ankle boots, 3 prs putties, about 40 prs socks and hankies. I can't think how I manage to keep warm—unless it is because I have a Wolsey valise and 2 sleeping bags. *AND* (but whisper it not in Gath)—an officer's kit must not exceed 35 pounds (lbs. 35) in weight. If I am ever asked to show my kit, I shan't know whether to show the trench coats or the field boots! I have quite got over the unpleasantness of getting back, and am settled down again to the old business. The last lot of cakes were grrand. Would you mind sending me out *Kim* (one of the Kiplings) in my next parcel. My leave really fitted in amazingly well, didn't it? Getting back in such good time, and crossing back on a Sunday, "an all." I think we get twice as much out of the house now as we did by the old arrangement. I suppose there is almost too much room now. Love from CHRISTIAN.

30.1.17.

MY DEAR OLD HUMP

How's life? I am looking forward to a letter from you giving the following information, viz. (1) How you like your study, and how much you dislike your study companion? (2) Your opinion of (a) G.F.

(b) The lady matron.

(c) Your form master.

(d) The VIth whose study you have to clean.

(e) Your head fag. (3) Rugby in general, does it or wasn't it? Give explanatory diagram. This frost is beginning to pall, all the shell holes are frozen solid. It is now snowing and the wily 5.9 is not as quiescent as one might wish. I ran across Edmund Mitchell yesterday, who came into tea, and we had a long buck. His battery (6″ Hows.) is about a mile down the road. We are rather unpleasantly close to a X roads, which is about the hottest shop in France. The hun strafes it at all hours of the day and night. Just been reading *Naish Notes—Tower of Strength* —not 'arf! Yrs., C. C. CARVER.

2.2.17.

DEAREST MUM

How is it with the fastness? Business here is much as usual, we purvez a number of obi per diem, and receive goods in kind from the "allymans." You will be glad to hear I have at last run across Edmund Mitchell. Osborne discovered him in an O.P., and he came in to tea. I walked home with him and we had a long buck. He lives with the lordly 6″ Hows. about a mile down the road, so I ought to meet him occasionally. We discovered with amusement that whereas a year ago he was a bombadier, he is now a full Lieutenant and I remain a humble 2nd Lt., and with mighty poor prospects at that. Pinhey got his "second spot" a few days ago. Only about the first dozen of his term got it, so there are still the rest of his term, and about 150 "rankers" before mine arrives. Horrid thought! I have very much enjoyed *A Silent Witness.* Towards the end the spelling gets rather quaint, in fact the compositor gets so carried away by excitement that he describes a cigar as being "melanotic in colour

and replusive in aspect." I hope to get a few days in the Wagon line shortly, though this may not come off as Rowbotham is about to become an intrepid aviator, and we are lending a subaltern to another battery. I am feeling very fit, though I am getting chilblains for the first time on record. Best of love to Aunts Dora and Fanny (if you are still in Devon), Dieu te garde ma très chère.

CHRISTIAN.

5.2.17.

MY DEAR DAD

I am spending 5 days at the Wagon Line. Should I ever become sufficiently mentally deficient to develop a taste for Arctic exploration, I shall urge the fact that I once spent 5 days of the cold snap of 1917 in No. 122 billet—and survived !—as my only qualification. The cold is perfectly frightful—you sit over a non-calorific stove, till one or more limbs are frost bitten, and then rise to try and restore circulation. As a direct consequence the only remaining glass hurtles to the floor, your chair crashes into the fuel supply, and 75% of the miscellaneous burden of the table are cleared. The remaining 25% are thrown at you. The lamp usually upsets :—one day the infernal place will catch fire,—but I shall at least die warm ! I had a very cheery day in A—— yesterday. I journeyed to and from by shamelessly cadging lifts, on lorries and cars. I had an excellent bath and haircut, a magnificent lunch (*ONLY* 5 courses), "such stuff as dreams are made of," and did some successful shopping. We have a number of tame bosche prisoners working for us in the horse lines, who provide me with a feeling of satisfaction whenever I see

them. Thanks for your letters, I am getting all the Mags. etc. all right. So glad the 3 boys are getting along happily. I expect your guard "do's" are fearfully chilly "cold and frore" as Rupert Brooke says. Love from

CHRISTIAN.

8.2.17.

VERY DEAREST MUM

One imagines that the schoolboy of 3000 A.D., grinding over his history, might run across a passage something like this—"in tracing the progress of the great European struggle during the early months of 1917, we must not lose sight, amidst so many important happenings, of one factor. That factor was the abnormal severity of the winter—known for many years as the great frost of 1917." Next morning, of course, he would think it was 1817, and be perfectly incapable of saying what any of the "important happenings" were. Sic transit gloria belli. To-morrow I return to the gun line, after 5 chilly but, on the whole, pleasant days at the Wagon line. I had one very good day in A——, where I enjoyed a bath, hair cut, etc., and a magnificent lunch. I have the happy temperament, which can be perfectly happy with such "small beer" enjoyments. Thanks for your letter of 2nd and 3rd, when do you leave Heddonland? Let me know your new address in good time, as the posts are very jerky. You may imagine our principal topic is U.S.A. G. Campbell is a naturalised American and an "ensign" of light Cavalry, so he already sees himself commanding at least a division in the U.S. Expeditionary Force! Heaps of love from CRICK.

13.2.17.

"Who is he?"

My dear Dad

Answer adjudged correct—as so many correct answers have been submitted the 5/- offered will be devoted to the causes of charity. After reading the article I said "Here, here," loudly to the mystification of a number of bystanders. We have moved into a new position. There is a difference between a palace and a pig-sty, but it is nothing to the view one takes of a position on the day one leaves it compared to the day you occupied it. We look rather as if we had been washed up by the tide or something, as the ground has been so hard we haven't been able to dig ourselves in. Now, however, it is loosening up a bit and we are getting on better. I nearly slew the major the other morning, we were constructing a dug-out at the bottom of a shaft (once German). Having lugged a sheet of corrugated iron up twenty steps, I let it go, the Major was standing at the foot! I am pleased to be able to state that he is progressing favourably. Love from Christian.

Thanks awfully for ordering the records. Got Blackwood this morning.

17.2.17.

My dear Maurice

One of the more "offensive" signs of spring is the large quantity of ammunition one is required to handle. This day have I pushed, pulled, lifted, dropped, rolled, etc., so much ammunition, that I would never handle another round. For our doings to-day see the British Official. Quite a goodly scrap. I was at the battery for once—and

nearly had my ear-drums broken, for we had not got our "pieces" in pits, and wherever you stand you get in the way of the "asabaric" lines. Hun prisoners were very fed up with life—so jaded they weren't even pleased to be captured. Campbell met a Ger. Sgt. Major he used to know in America (to the mutual surprise of both parties). What about a letter? I don't seem to have heard from you lately. Make Hump write too and oblige yrs.,

CHRISTIAN.

18.2.17.

MY DEAREST MUM

Thanks so much for the chronicle of events. "How the mighty *have* fallen!" Our doings yesterday will probably figure in to-day's paper. The frost is gone and with it the snow, once again our life, our universe is mud. After a long spell of cold the earth seems to be opening its pores, and there is a smell of steam in the air. One of the less fortunate results of a thaw is that boots appear, here, there, and everywhere, frequently in the most disquieting places. There is no particular objection to the boots of course—it is the occupants. . . . . ! Can you imagine a country that is *all* holes, for that is what we live in. The Somme is one immense battlefield and the tortured earth is scattered everywhere, with debris, scores of shells, burst and otherwise, barbed wire, rifles, bombs, and kit of all sorts. Every now and then one comes across a dead leviathan, a derelict tank. There are no birds, but there are lots of rats, super-rats. A good many prisoners came through here yesterday, by an extraordinary coincidence Campbell met a fellow ("Smith" afore-time), a German Sgt.-Major, whom he had known in America. He was pleased to see Campbell,

and bitterly regretted ever having left U.S.A. We have moved forward again, so I am rather a long way from Edmund now. Heaps of love to Aunts D. and F.

CRICK.

20.2.17.

MY DEAR DAD

AS you will have seen we have been busy again lately, hence my bad correspondency. Some day the story of this show will be published, and will stand as one of the most extraordinary pieces of heroism British Infantry have ever shewn. To-day is one of those nasty, wet sticky ones—one has to be careful not to stand in one place too long, or one adheres, is engulphed as it might be. A young and lusty 60-pounder lives just behind us here, and blows out the carbide lamp whenever he fires—is it possible to have anything more annoying, je crois que non. Hump seems to be having a great old time, likewise Francis. I met a fellow yesterday who knows Bobby Carver and Uncle Willie. Is in the same division, and knew Bobby in Egypt, also Tom Carver and H. Q. Carver. After meeting Edmund Mitchell the other day, I feel quite en famille! This thaw brings that to light, which testifies to the fact, that this was a battlefield not so very many months since. We had a fire next door here the other afternoon—as you know water is carried up in petrol tins, but if petrol is sent up by mistake, and if, moreover, the supposed "water" is boiled, preparatory to making tea, well what can you expect? We live in a little quarry, which, besides ourselves, is full to the brim with Infantry. I could only stand on top and laugh, for the British soldier dealing with a minor emergency "chez soi" is the most comic creature on earth. It reminded me of

those pictures with thousands of little figures, "A fire in the Casey rents" or something like that. Love from

CHRISTIAN.

22.2.17.

MA CHÈRE MARRAINE LOUIE

A scribble to thank you so much for sending me out books. This murky weather we put in a lot of time reading. This stark, dark, dead country is a very slough of despond just now—you plod along with about half a battlefield on each foot, and you feel that running would be a physical impossibility. Enter a "crump" and your theory was incorrect! I ran across Edmund Mitchell, the other day, and also a man who knew Percy Carver and the Tom Carvers. I refrain, with commendable fortitude, from saying, "What a small place the world is." Natheless (that's a good one, let's have it again) natheless, one does run across people in the most amazing way. One of my brother subalterns met a German prisoner a few days ago whom he had known well in America. And I am always meeting people I knew at school. Your most affectionate filleul

CHRISTIAN.

22.2.17.

MY DEAREST MUM

Et le menage, est-ce que ça marche bien? This round of foggy days is sometimes most dreary. I trust you are enjoying sweet airs and a fair view of God's earth. I am very much enjoying Chesterton on Browning—I am a great admirer of Chesterton. He says such frightfully true things, for instance—"we all have a profound and manly dislike of books we have not read." Campbell went into

hospital to-day with a nasty chill and cough, I expect he will be away for about a fortnight. I am feeling thoroughly fit,—I have been extraordinarily blessed this winter in that way. The Major got an R.A. journal the other day. I am now 166 on the list of 2nd LTs, of whom there are 1400 odd! Heaps of love from CRICK.

25.2.17.

MY DEAR DAD

The beggar has "offed" it—so up sticks and after 'em. One hopes this is the beginning of the end, but as you say it will be a long, long finish. However I should hardly think Maurice would have to come out here. He could not do better than go into the Guards, when the time comes,—if he does take Infantry, as I suppose he must. Our own future movements are very much in the air, we can't stay here and Lord knows where we can go to! This is a strong move from the huns' immediate point of view, although it is fundamentally a confession of weakness. Ground is no good to anybody if it does not entail destroying the enemy. Just seen yesterday's *Daily Mail*, we are no longer playing at war, at any rate. Thanks so much for the Gramophone records, though I fear it may be sometime before I get a chance to play them! We are enjoying quite a fine afternoon, after a long spell of misty weather. Love from CHRISTIAN.

25.2.17.

MY DEAREST MUM

Many thanks for your letters of 15th & 16th. Let me know your movements in plenty of time. As you will doubtless have seen ere this it is a case of "up sticks and

after them" with us. Well, we've had our whack at the hun, so we can't grumble if he makes a few points now. It is infernally inconvenient all the same, so there goes my good resolution! I am progressing favourably with *Europe Unbound*, though I don't go the whole way with Lisle March P. by any means. I believe more in the material welfare of the individual, and hardly think that war, with all its horrid waste, is necessary for the furtherance of great ideals. So many lives are thrown away, on issues dependent on human folly—but as he says, one does not grudge the lives expended on the main issue. Heaps of love from CRICK.

27.2.17.

MY DEAR MAURICE

Many thanks for your letter. I like "small beer chronicles," however trivial. You will be glad to hear that the grand obstacle Hun Hunt is now open. There is no charge for entry! At present we are sitting looking dubiously at the first fence. It's a devilish stiff one, old lad, devilish stiff. And lots more like it to follow. However it's all in a lifetime—and if one does take a nasty toss, there is always the satisfaction of knowing that one couldn't do it in a better cause. And if a man gives his life for a definite object, it is not natural to suppose that that object will cease to interest him, he must "carry on" in some form or other. Otherwise death, the most natural thing in life, would be unnatural. We pass into life from the unknown, we pass out of life to the unknown, but the "wheel swerves not a hair," there can surely be no stopping. I am reading *Europe Unbound* by L. March-Phillipps. He is very insistent that we are fighting for Liberty, though it is

so natural, so fundamental in us that we cannot always realize it. And it is so, I suppose. I always feel that I am fighting for England, English fields, lanes, trees, English atmospheres, and good days in England—and all that is synonymous for Liberty. One of our battery commanders was very badly wounded to-day, reconnoitring the place we are moving into, hence these thoughts. A rotten job, for he leaves (and I fear he must) a wife and 2 kiddies. En avant !—up to the Breach, for Merrie England !

CHRISTIAN.

Best respects to the dissipated Hump, many thanks to him for his letter.

2.3.17.

MY DEAREST MUM

Just a wee scribble before we set off on our wanderings after the hun. The weather is getting more springlike, and old Sol has been quite kindly to-day. A Major Huleatt in this Brigade died of wounds to-day—very sad as he leaves a wife and 2 children, no money. I am still addressing to Heddon's Gate. I hear the new regulations about convalescent officers have created a regular out-cry at home, they *ARE* rather stiff. If you have done your bit and got bowled over, it seems hard that you can't have a cheery time before you come out again.

T.O.L.
C.

7.3.17.

MY DEAR DAD

Excuse the long interval between scrawls, but our hands have been pretty full lately. I got the records of "The Yeoman" and "Pinafore," but smashed to smithereens, sickening wasn't it. I am afraid the only way to send

records is through the people at the shop, who pack them in wooden boxes and between shavings. I am so sorry to have given you all the trouble and expense for nothing. A horrible cold Easterly gale to-day, but I hope we are about due for some better weather sometime soon. The news in to-day's paper is not too exhilarating—save us from the "valley of doubt, which leads to the cavern of sin," as they say in the "Rose of Persia." I am at the Wagon line at the moment, living in a pretty dash blank sort of tent. So sorry to hear F. has measles, and glad to hear H. is better. Love from C.

9.3.17.

My dearest Mum

Owing to the strenuous times we are living through, and the miserable failure of the post to do its duty for the last 3 days, we seem to have been out of communication for quite a period. For the last three days it has blown an Easterly Gale, to-day it has snowed plentifully. We are comforting ourselves with the saw that "March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb." Things, natheless, are going pretty well, and I think we have got over rather a stiff fence with credit. I am spending a few days at the Wagon Line with Y. I like Y, there is an infinity of good in him really. I hope Francis is getting along all right, and will be on his pins again soon. Heaps of love to all from C.

13.3.17.

My very dearest Mum,

Ça marche! Baggedad as it were. Here we are treading on the bosche's tail, not gently. The situation is becoming

rather Gilbertian. I was so glad to hear all about the Prices. I can imagine the atmosphere redolent with reminiscence. B. P. always seems to me a few centuries younger than the others. I suppose it is always the case with the youngest member of a large family. Agnes Foote is another. I am still progressing favourably with *Europe Unbound*, and still much enjoying it. There is an awfully good article in this month's *Blackwood's* about the work of the flying corps on September 15th, particularly so to us, who saw it all from the ground. I must really quote what he says about 2 observers who were fatally wounded, and shot down hun planes during their last spurt of consciousness. "Imagine yourself under fire, in an Aeroplane, at 10,000 feet. Imagine that only a second ago you were in the country of shadows. Imagine yourself feeling giddy and deadly sick from loss of blood. Imagine what is left of your consciousness to be stabbed insistently by a throbbing pain. Now imagine how you would force yourself in this condition to grasp a machine gun in your numbed hand, pull back the cocking handle, take careful aim at a fast machine, allowing for deflection, and fire until you sink into death. . . ." They really are beyond admiration. We live next door to a Captain of South African "Heavies" who trained Edmund, and sings his praises in no measured strain. His best friend was a fellow called Cotton, in the flying Corps, who always "shot" Ward's battery—that is he flew over the hun battery they were engaging, and ranged the guns on it with wireless. He knocked out two of the guns of a German 5.9 How. battery of 4 guns one afternoon and then sent a message, "Wind too strong. I cannot get back. Carry on." And knowing that by no power on earth could he finish that day as anything but a corpse or prisoner, he methodically

finished off the remaining 2 hun guns, and then fought 3 enemy machines to the last. I trust all at "Naish" are flourishing, and that our F. is getting better. Much love from C. C. C.

14.3.17.

My dear old Hump

How slips it this life with you? *WE* are pushing ahead almost *too* fast, but thank God we are in sight of getting out of this hideous bit of country over which the worst fighting has passed. Perhaps you imagine it as a place of broken trees and ruined houses—as a fact there is nothing—*NOthing*. We live in that desolate belt, extending from the Ancre to the Somme, some 5 miles in depth, where no trees remain to make a show of green in the coming Spring, and the châteaux and churches are pounded to mounds of red and white dust. We have just passed through a stage in which our habits have been largely nocturnal, owing to the bad taste of the hun in holding the high ground. Imagine us setting out as dusk is falling with some 60 braves, each leading 2 stalwart horses, on an enterprise connected with ammunition. We reach the appointed place in the pitchiest of darkness, and labour long in mud, and among pertinaciously surviving barbed wire, till by 2 A.M. or so the good work is done. A sickly yellow moon is showing now, looking almost as jaded as we. Wearily I clamber upon a steed, once white, and with some half dozen of the rear guard, set out for home. We proceed hastily through this first village (there are quite a few walls and things left, the advance has washed over it so quickly), for it has an evil reputation for travellers—no one has yet been found with sufficient hardihood to *live* there! A certain corner rounded we breathe more freely.

Along the cliff road till we are brought to halt by a "block" in the road ahead. On our left a steep and shell-pocked bank, over which the moon is peeping. To our right and below us is the river stretching across a vista of broken stumps, running water and shell pools, to the skeleton gleaming white of another village on the far bank. If only an artist could paint the grim scene now while the hand of war and death is still hovering over it. In our steel helmets and chain visors we somehow recall *Pilgrim's Progress*, armoured figures passing through the valley of the shadow. On—for Apollyon's talons are over near. Steadily along the road, round curves and through a hollow, till we reach a point where some dead horses lie across the road. They were not there when we came up, and some ammunition wagons, standing horseless, and sprinkled with earth from 5.9″ crumps, tell their own story. Clatter and splash and clatter, on and on from desolation to desolation, till we reach the wagon line as dawn is breaking. And next night it is all to do again. By way of relieving the monotony we have just chivied a wild boar. God knows where he came from or why. Perhaps to visit the home of his childhood—in which case he will be disappointed. A heron also lives hereabouts. It is the last place *I* should choose. Yours, CHRISTIAN.

14.3.17.

MY DEAR ADA

Thanks so much for yours of the 9th. The parcels have been arriving in pretty good trim, but the records rather resembled the "clay pigeons" I used to help Dad destroy *AFTER* being smitten. Signs of Spring at last, thank heavens this blooming old winter is nearly finished. We put up a

wild boar, of all creatures on earth, to-day, and birds are starting to appear a bit. I was so sorry to hear of your bereavement. I do hope this business is finished this summer and that old Mott can go straight on to Oxford. Love from

C.

21.3.17.

My dearest Mum

Our Cheero after the hun will doubtless have caused you some thrills. What a relief to get into decent country again, we have been having war "de luxe" on the whole. Quite a fitting finale to our long months of fighting in this part of the world, for I believe we are for "pastures new" very shortly, though the "green fields" must be left behind. I shall have heaps of adventures to tell you all about when we next meet. The Russian news was a regular bomb-shell, but it all seems to be for the best. The French have done magnificently, and one feels glad it fell to them to get civilians back again. I will write more fully when things settle down a bit. Heaps of love to Dad and Ada from Crick.

25.3.17.

My dearest Mum

I got your letter this morning, written after you had seen our "bit o' noos." We are back in comparative civilization again, and it is good to be in range of a fire which does not exude noxious fumes into the atmosphere, and it is even better to get into pyjamas at night, an experience I have not enjoyed for the last 12 weeks. We had a most comfortable march down. When we gathered the battery together, in a certain broken (and poisoned) village, preparatory to marching down, one could only offer a prayer of thankfulness, to

the power that surely is, that we were going down the same company who came up in January. Marching through the broken land, one felt that, tortured and torn though it was, it was free at last. May it never feel the deathly hand of war again. And now the knights errant of the Q.F. (18 Pdr.) are away to free some other bit of country. Spring—and the open road. BON Alors. C. C. C.

25.3.17.

My dear Dad

Excuse such a long lapse in correspondence, but history has been hustling a bit of late. We are now on our way to fresh fields to conquer, and are resting in the village where our Wagon Line was last January. We have had a really excellent "trip in" this time, so different from the dreary waiting last autumn. A steady push forward, followed by the big chase forward after the hun, and now away. The last bit has really been great fighting, regular open warfare again. And we go away a full company. Something much more than luck has been with us all along. We have come unscathed out of the most hair-raising episodes, when people immediately in front and behind have paid the toll. I am glad we were here to see this advance, we have had our full share in working for it since July. I am extremely fit.—Spring is beginning, and we are about to set out on our travels (à la caravan) through a new country, a good life enough truly. Love from Christian.

2.4.17.

My dear Dad

We are now in quite a different part of the world, after a quite successful march. Would you please send me my

cheque book as the young one is finished. Campbell has returned to the fold, so we are now 7, which makes the work fairly light. More later. Yours, CHRISTIAN.

P.S.—My "second spot" ought to be coming along about the 22nd, so keep a look-out for it in the *Gazette*.

2.4.17.

MY VERY DEAREST MUM

Our journey is over and we are most comfortably established—at the other end. A day on the march is something like this—Scene, a limitless expanse of water and mud, a team of ten horses are floundering along with a gun wallowing in their wake. I am likewise floundering along, keeping up a stream of abuse and exhortation at the top of my voice. "Keep 'em going! keep 'em at it! Push those off horses along! etc., etc." The gun lurches drunkenly into a more than usually deep shell hole, and stops with an air of finality. "—— —— — — ——! On to the wheels the gunners, traces up the drivers, TRACES UP! Now then, all ready? TOGETHER—WALK—MARCH!" The gun doesn't shift an inch. I dismally contemplate following the —— — gun into its grave, and putting an end to my troubles.——

Four o'clock, sir! I realize that I am orderly officer and it is my job to arise for early stables. As we sleep in a different village every night it needs a considerable effort to remember *where* we are. Out into the frosty starlight, the spire of the local church shows black against the first streaks of light. Business with water and feed, a wash—cum whistlings and song, to the annoyance of Pinhey and Rowbotham, who are not yet properly awake. We charge

into breakfast. "Had a lot of trouble with the guns again last night, Major," say I. "Oh, I only had a working party last night," says the Major. This particular nightmare usually afflicts at least one of us every night. By 8 A.M. everything is packed away and we take the road, usually outspanning at about 4 P.M., and the business of the day is over by 5 P.M. A great life, and far the best way of seeing and knowing the country. The rolling downs pass gradually into a country of woods and broken hills, with grey stone villages very like home. A long up-hill climb and suddenly you overlook the plain, and the rich towns of it. We are not far from where we were last August, and very comfortable, as I have said. Tons of love from

CHRISTIAN.

"Au Grand Hasard."

5.4.17.

MY DEAR MAURICE

How fearfully riling about the "durned medico" at Coventry. Of course it is only a question of (1) trying other places till you find one to pass you. (2) Getting fitted with glasses? You can always get round things like that, if you try long enough, for such is our noble army. I feel sure it is simply the result of beaucoup de swot in an insufficient light. Now what about having a shot for R.G.A. as Mum suggests—they *Might* kick up rusty because you are not a mathematician, but judging by the average young officer, I don't think so. I should have a jolly good smack at it, don't be put off by a few rebuffs. They are bringing out such a lot of 'umteen' inch now, that you would stand a pretty good chance. We are having a very

enjoyable rest at present, in fact we haven't had such a good time since we came to this fair land (what ho !). The country is thick with good farms, who will always do their best for you, and we are practically *IN* a good-sized town.
T.O.L. Yours, C. C. CARVER.

7.4.17.

MY DEAREST MOTHER

There is a great unpretentiousness about our life here, and, I think, about this country. Brought up in a society where the outsides of our houses harmonize with the insides, the interior of a French farm is always rather a surprise. Having skirted the manure heap of this farm, for instance, one is inclined to look rather dubiously at the plaster exterior, and the moss-covered thatch, with the selection of ambitious plants along the roof. But entering you find a cool and clean kitchen, now pensioned off and used as a sitting room, and leading from it our bedroom. Was it only chance which made Madame omit the usual chromo-lithographs, and equip the ample bed with curtains lilac and rods vert? I hardly think so, for impelled by something deeper than herself, to put a strip of oil-cloth across the mantelpiece, she chose a simple rose pattern on white. It is afternoon and a half holiday, outside the chanticleer ménage pursue the business of life, the saddler mends the harness, the wheeler makes tables, and the fitter sleeps ! Two mules having successfully eaten their head-ropes, stand on 3 legs (each !) and drowsily wonder what we ever want to leave a place like this for.

Easter Day. — A most divine day, Spring, belated Spring at last. We have just been playing a little rough

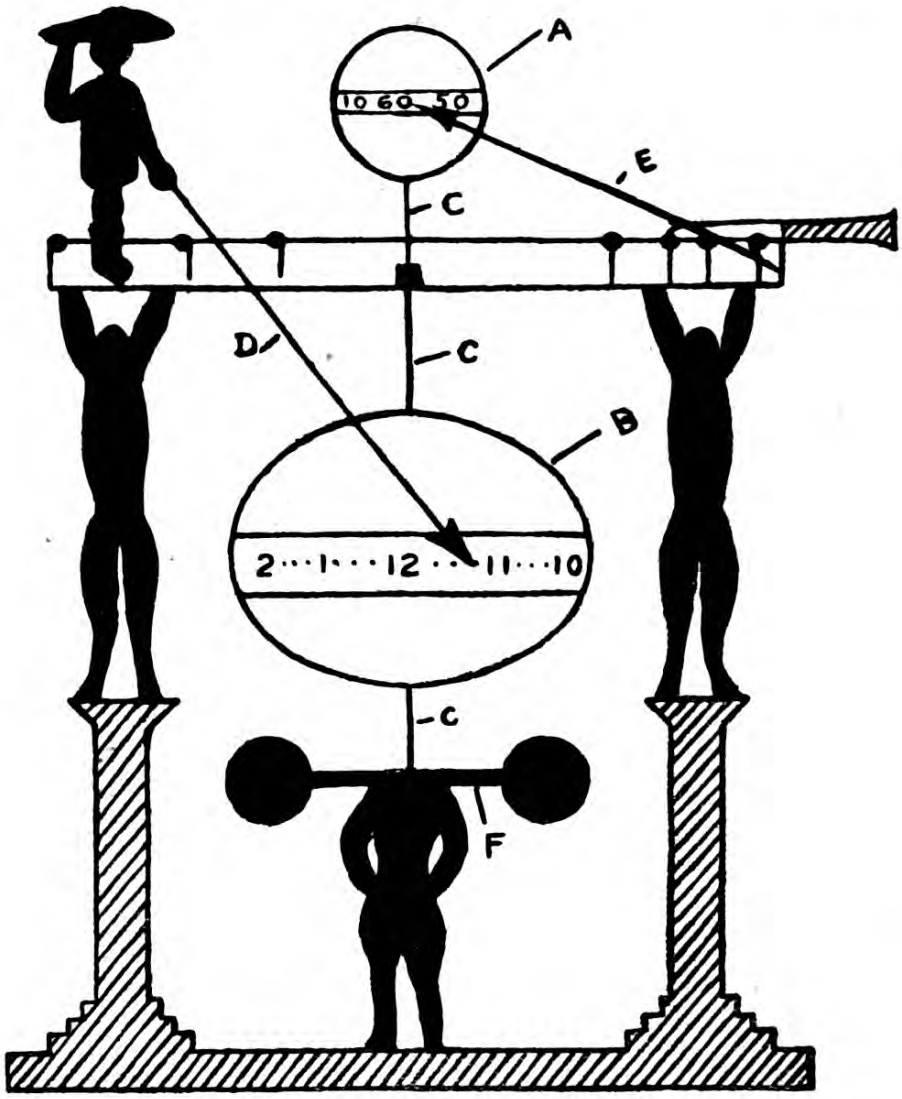
and ready cricket on a nightmare of a pitch. Heaps of love from C. C. C.

"Au Grand Hasard."
11.4.17.

My dear Dad

Great rejoicings here over the push at Arras. For the last 2 months, whenever things were not going too well—it has been all right "the push at Arras starts to-morrow." We have not been out of a show since July, and we feel quite lost. I suppose Spring will come with a rush when it does come, we are going through a period of blizzards at present. I think it would be a good thing for Maurice to have a shot at R.G.A. or R.F.A. before deciding on Infantry. He should stand a good chance, judging from the numbers we are supplying for commissions here. . . We are as pleased as you are about America. America comes in, Germany makes an unsuccessful attack near Rheims, we get in a kidney punch at Arras. Bon! The Major is on a special leave at present, well earned, as he has not had one since October. We had a Divisional horse show on Monday, the first since we left Heytesbury. A wonderfully good show, and considering that we have been out a bare fortnight, miraculous. I showed a black team, as at Heytesbury, but did not do anything. I did not expect to really, as unfortunately it had to go in as a Wagon team, and so compete with the Ammunition Columns who have had a fairly soft time. We are much intrigued by a mysterious clock at present in H——. I wonder if you can supply a hint. It consists of 2 blown glass bulbs, hermetically sealed, each with a strip of paper round showing figures. "A" revolves once in an hour and is graduated in minutes up to 60. "B" revolves once in 12 hours and is graduated

in hours. "C," a thin steel spindle. "D" the hour hand of some white metal. "E" minute hand, yellow metal. "F" brass weight, on shoulders of "Atlas," on which spindle



turns. Nothing moves except A, B. It is not electric or magnetic, but is driven by "sunlight," otherwise it is a secret. Most annoying! It is perpetual, and started to register its slice of infinity in 1900! Love to all from CHRISTIAN.

"Au Grand Hasard."
12.4.17.

MY DEAREST MUM

Wild dissipation, I am going to be inoculated again! What positively frightful weather. I emerged from the billet at 6.25 A.M. "How nice the early Spring sunshine is." 2 minutes later I was miserably seeking shelter from a blizzard. Thanks so much for all the books and the super-excellent cakes. I have just finished reading a very old friend of ours, none other than *A lame dog's diary*. I much enjoyed it. I have read *The Rocks of Valpré*, but it is good, so I am reading it again. So glad old Mott scraped through O.K. I am all for his having a shot at R.G.A. or R.F.A. if not the Guards. . . . I wonder how E. M. got scuppered at B——, at least what he was doing there when rifle bullets were floating about, F.O.O. I suppose. Heaps of love to you, my dearest old dear, your letters mean a tremendous lot to me.

CRICK.

"Au Grand Hasard."
12.4.17.

MY DEAR OLD SOUL MAURICIO

So bucked to hear you got through the teeth business by the skin of your eyes (that is *vice versa*). If you don't take Artillery,—but I hope you will,—I should have a whack at the Guards. . . . I was amused at "The Watch dogs" in yesterday's *Punch*, in particular "a few short and precise orders to salute all civilians and pay double for what we buy" is so true. In moments of great stress, our leaders occasionally unbend and refer to the enemy as "the Boche," further than that we never go. Voster.

C. C. C.

"Au Grand Hasard."
16.4.17.

DEAR OLD SOUL

I have considerable hopes of getting 3 days or so with Mum at Rouen. Don't put Rouen on the address, A.P.O. is in place of it. It is raining here, but then of course it would be. A splendidly sporting effort on Mum's part, surely she is the "best ever." The hun is going under quickly we hope, at any rate he is getting every encouragement to do so. Since reading Ever's letter, I think the Rifle Brigade seems the best thing if you don't take R.A., but *HAVE A SHOT AT IT.* It sounds as if you ought to strike a good battalion. Yrs. C. C. C.

Note.—The two following letters from Christian I had handed to me one morning, when I was sitting with Edmund Mitchell. He, Edmund, had been carried out on his bed into the sunshine in front of his ward at No. 2 Red Cross Hospital at Rouen. I had been in Rouen some 3 days. I had never dreamt that Christian would be able to get leave to come down and join me. I was carried off my feet with delight as I read his letters:

Au Grand Hasard.
16.4.17.

MY DEAREST MUM

I have great hopes of getting 3 days with you. I would have written before, but wanted to find out first if there was any chance of it. Thanks to a friend at Court, in the shape of Major Budden, who is acting brigade

major, the application has gone on, and I hope to hear to-morrow morning, starting on Thursday at 11.30 A.M., and arriving 3.30 A.M. the following morning (groans). I expect in that case I shall arrive before this does, but if not, leave a note at the R.T.O.'s office at the station, saying where you are likely to be found during the day, etc. Of course there is an even chance I may not get off at all, but espérons. I call it a real sporting effort on your part, and I wish your visit to the back of the front could have taken place under happier circumstances than old Edmund's dark hour. But begad this is life, for you and I, and death for many is just peace. Great happenings all along this battle line, and we are passing into the light at last. One has a feeling that *anything* might happen. This double line of trenches has seemed so inflexible, so permanent, that its break up gives that sensation. Best of luck to dear old Edmund. Vive les Alliés. Heaps and heaps of love from

CRICK.

16.4.17.

DEAREST MUM

Since writing to you this evening, I have heard about my leave (3 days). I cannot have it for a week, so will probably leave on the 23rd, arriving on the 24th. One of the conditions was that I gave my address, and as "The hotel de France" (near the Cathedral) was the only one anybody could tell me of, I had perforce to give that. So you will stay till the 24th, won't you? T.O.L. Yours,

C. C. CARVER.

I wrote a letter to Christian at once to say I would expect him on the 24th, the C.O. at the Hospital kindly

promising me to see that it was forwarded to him up the line by special messenger.

"Au Grand-Hasard."
17.4.17.

My Dearest Mum

My last from you is of the 14th from S'hampton, and I am longing to hear you had a good crossing and are safely ensconced in A.P.O. 2 land. A most loathsome experience this crossing business, the long route simply gives one the creeps, simply because one knows nothing about the situation, or what to expect. We are still at rest here, but are moving on to another place in a few days, so I went round to the gilded staff and asked them to shake my leave up a bit, so that I could kick off from here, instead of some dead and alive little rail-head in the front of beyond. We expect the Major back any time now, though I daresay he has been held up like you. So sorry our Hump has had tonsilitis, "it never rains" you must be thinking. Heaps of love. C. C. C.

To Humphrey

Au Grand Hasard.
18.4.17.

My poor dear Boy

I was so desolated to hear that you had tonsilitis. I know what you mean by chronic boredom, there are times when the only thing to do is to rag as destructively as possible, till you enjoy any sedative amusement—and when "au lit" you cannot do it. We are moving on again in a day or two, which is a pity, from a purely creature comfortable point of view. However it is time we were after the rotten corpse-stewing huns again.

Au Grand Hasard.
21.4.17.

My dearest Mum

I began to wonder what of you some days gone, but from the sudden break in correspondence and a letter from our Oomp of the (alas, so overcome was he by the magnificence of the very thickest Harborne V.T.C. note-paper he has omitted the date), I gather you have crossed, and are now under the sure but fearfully slow postal system of this country. If you are not already doing so, I should get somebody at the Hospital to censor (*i.e.* just initial the envelope) your letters. (1) It is twice as quick. (2) It saves a stamp. I have heard nothing further about my leave, and am quite prepared to get it back any time between this and mid-summer, asking me to please state whether of pure European descent—or something. But while there's life there's hope, even in Red-tapia. *HEaps* of love, my sporting old Mum, from Crick.

Au Grand Hasard.
22.4.17.

My dear Maurice

I cannot but applaud your decision to stick to Infantry. If you feel you ought to, then it is the only thing to be done. I fear my conscience is rather un-Imperial, where my own immediate relations are concerned. And now have *AT* you, my bonny boy! "So many people are trying to get Flying Corps or R.F.A. to avoid the trenches" I really must defend the Royal Regiment against such an implication. By way of an example, take our last 3 months in the line. No Infantry would be actually in

front line for more than a month, whereas the gunners are in action for the whole time. We spend 24 hours per week actually with the Infantry, and there is always an F.O.O. and Liaison officer with an attack. Then the Infantry always have dug-outs, while we have to make our own. But I admit ours is a pleasanter job on the whole. As for the R.F.C., sufficient to say that in every 50 officers' casualties lately 40 have been airmen. I haven't heard anything from Mum from this side yet, nor anything about my 3 days' leave. We are still in rest, as after what we have been through it takes time to restore our pristine resilience (what, what !). Yours ever,

C. C. C.

"Au Grand Hasard."
7 P.M., 22.4.17.

MY SPORTING OLD MA

I was bien heureux to get yours of the 18th and 20th and to know that you were safe and comfortable. No signs of my leave yet, is it not too exasperating? I am feeling very sick about it. There is absolutely no reason why I shouldn't go, the leave has been recommended by every one, including the General, but the wretched D.A.A.G. of the division. . . . Consequently you, my dearest Mum, who have come all the way over, will probably be disappointed. Oh, strafe all this miserable red tape. So awfully glad to hear that Edmund is better, give him my very best respects, and all good wishes for a très vite recovery. Heaps and heaps of love from C. C. C.

P.S.—If I do not get my leave before 10 A.M. to-morrow I shall wire to you. I wonder, if I *CANNOT* get it,

whether you could possibly come up here (Hazebrouck) for a day or two.

Hotel de France, Rouen.
Tuesday, April 24th.

DEAREST MUM,

Come and have lunch with me at the H. de France at 1.15. Just arrived 9 hours late, very dirty, so cannot be in time for lunch with you à L'hostel. Thine

C. C. C.

I went across to Rouen during the Easter holidays of April 1917, arriving on the 17th to see Edmund Mitchell, dangerously ill with wounds in No. 2 Red Cross Hospital.

Christian joined me there Tuesday April the 24th. I had engaged a room for him, at his request at the Hôtel de France, Rue de Carne, quite near the Red Cross Hostel, Rue de Juifs, where I was. I spent the days before he came writing notes to him c/o the R.T.O. at both the Rouen stations "Rive Gauche" and "Rive Droite," visiting them and making many enquiries as to when he might be expected; I also went round not a few times to the Hôtel de France in case they had had tidings of him. Sister Burke came with me to the "Rive Gauche Gare," on the Monday before he arrived, and we interviewed nice R.E. men in charge who promised to do all they could to expedite Christian's arrival.

On Tuesday morning I went with Mrs. Naldrett out to the Cemetery, where she had promised a Mother who had just lost a son, to look after his grave, the Mother had left the Hostel a few days before. Then I went up to see

Edmund as usual. When I sat down to lunch at the Hostel I found Christian's note on the table in my place asking me to lunch with him at the Hôtel de France. He had just arrived and was having a clean up. I wasn't long in arriving there; he was still having his bath and I sat in the courtyard and waited till he appeared, towel over arm, very clean and smiling with tousled hair. We felt it was wonderful to meet there. I sat in his room with him while he brushed himself up; it felt homelike to see his possessions lying about, the books he had brought to read on the way, etc.

After lunch we went to the Hostel. I picked up a few things I was taking to Edmund, and off we went—up the Rue Jeanne d'Arc—along the Rue Champs des Oiseaux, and to the Red Cross Hospital, an attractive building perched up high, at one time a Monastery. We were soon with Edmund and all having tea together; E. A. M. didn't look very well that day. Later on Crick and I went off for a walk, to the left of the Hospital along an uphill road till we came out on a hill-top; the view over Rouen with its many spires and churches was grand. C. C. C. walked at a great pace with a wonderfully springy gait, one saw and felt he was full of life and vigour. *I* felt full of life when he seemed so glad I had come over, and said it seemed the natural and right sort of thing for me to be doing. He talked away, said he had done a lot of walking during these last months and had felt very fit and well, he enjoyed the life, he liked his C.O. Major Bowen very much. After a round, keeping mostly on the top of a ridge, we came down by the "Rue de Puits Communs" to the house where Miss Annie Kempe lived (a friend of Molly's and Mary Foote's whom I had been to see once or twice before). We found

her in, and then from there Christian went to call on Miss Hilda Wiggin, a cousin of Tim Kenrick's who was living close by; he found her in, and when she came along presently on her way to town we arranged that Christian should meet her and some other girls, friends of hers, by the Kiosk near to the Bridge over the River, and that they should all go off together to some sports and races the Australians were having on the Racecourse on Wednesday afternoon, on the outskirts of Rouen to the left. When this was settled and Miss Wiggin had left, Christian and I wended our way down to the Cathedral. We wandered through the beautiful place and knelt in the Joan of Arc chapel. Christian dined at the Hostel with me, and proud and rejoiced was I to introduce him to the group of kind friends there; he sat in the lounge where we all used to congregate, looking very happy and smoking cigarettes. It was a big covered court sort of place with a stove (and a very hot one) in the middle; many easy-chairs, with cushions of red turkey twill, and big red shades on the lamps, gave this room a warm and glowing appearance and made it a comfortable homy-looking place. The whole atmosphere of the Hostel was refreshing, Miss Campion the Commandant ran it very well, and there were delightful girls working there, V.A.D.'s. One of them, a Miss Nicholl, sister to a Nicholl Christian had been with and known at Rugby, was Parlour-maid. C. said he was glad I had told him whose sister she was, as she was very like her brother, and when she handed him the potatoes it would have exercised his mind much where he had seen her before; as it was, they exchanged ideas on matters Rugbeian, as he did also with Mrs. Whitworth, the Mother of one of the Rugby masters, who was at the Hostel. The Rugby "Whitters" (Captain Whitworth, M.C.,

R.W.F.) was at No. 2 Red Cross Hospital as well as Lieut. Whitworth, R.F.C., the latter seriously wounded; he had been in Hospital sometime, the Rugby Whitworth's wounds were happily slighter ones. Captain Whitworth had just been down from the line paying his brother and mother a visit, and had only been back a few days when he was wounded. Mrs. Whitworth on going up to No. 2 one day was told her son Captain Whitworth was there, and thought he had got leave again, much to her surprise, but was then told he was wounded. Christian and I saw the two brothers lying out side by side at No. 2, and Christian enjoyed his talks with Capt. W. very much.

In the evening after being sociable Christian and I would generally adjourn to the riverside, strolling over one of the bridges, and sitting on a seat on one of them and talking, or leaning over the parapet and watching the various craft on the river; there was usually a white Hospital ship lying alongside the Quay; the evenings were fairly light when we first used to sally forth. One evening we went along in the Bon Secours direction and then we turned down right on to the Quay; I expected every moment to be challenged—or shot. I particularly remember that evening talking of the family and the various relations, Christian asking me about my Mother and what her maiden name was? "Fraser, of rather a fine old Inverness-shire lot." "Funny that I have never asked you that before," said C. One evening we sat and had coffee outside the Café by the Kiosk; our talk was much about home and the boys—what Maurice said or thought about things, the sort of things he liked or disliked; he also let fall words showing the strong love and affection he felt for his Father, how as he had grown to manhood he valued and realised the good understanding between them.

More by his protecting loving manner than by actual words he showed how strong his love for one was, though he did let fall some words which I will always cherish. He spoke of himself and the boys as if they were bound together by an indissoluble tie and were *one*.

On Wednesday morning we had arranged to meet Annie Kempe near one of the Bridges, where the Bon Secours tram starts from; we went out and did a little shopping and were at the "Rendezvous" in good time and presently saw A. K. appear. She and Christian stood on the little platform outside the tram while I sat within; one gets a splendid view of Rouen and the River as one is dragged up the steep ascent, which turns and twists as we climb.

We went to the Church when we got to the top, not a very beautiful building, and on to the cliff overlooking the Seine and Rouen. After enjoying the view and strolling around for a time we got a tram back. We went with Annie Kempe round to the place where H. Wiggin was working at a restaurant for the Soldiers where they could get a mid-day dinner and tea, etc. The place was redolent of a good hot meal which was being served; we saw H. W. and made final arrangements where C. C. C. was to meet her and her friends. Christian and I went to lunch at the Hostel, after which he joined the party for the Sports and I went off to see Edmund at No. 2 as usual. I met Sister Burke that afternoon at "The Nouvelles Galeries" after I had been with Edmund; Sister B. and I had tea together, then she had to leave me, and I went to the Cathedral to wait there till Christian joined me, as we had arranged, at 6 o'clock. I had not to wait long; I was near one of the pillars by the entrance when he walked up to me with the usual military

salute. We both went to the Jeanne d'Arc chapel. I had been much struck with a French officer I had seen kneeling there, his long blue cloak falling round him, motionless in prayer for a long time.

Christian had thoroughly enjoyed his afternoon; he had escorted (or been escorted by four girls), all of them apparently in the best of spirits; one of them, a girl with red hair, seemed especially to have added to their gaiety. I was so delighted for Christian to have this little interlude from War and to have tasted the normal life of the young. Next morning, Thursday, we went up to see Edmund again, and sat sometime with him; he seemed much better. Christian went off and enjoyed a talk with Captain Whitworth. There was a Lieut. Smith in No. 2, "an excellent fellow" as C. called him. I had crossed with his Mother and we had both been at the Hostel together, then she had returned to England after about a week in Rouen. I had said I would sometimes look up her son if he would care to see me, she told me he would like it, and I had several very pleasant talks with him. I was particularly interested to hear that he was in Captain Dan Bradby's company in one of the Battalions of the Rifle Brigade. He spoke with great admiration of "Dan," he had such wonderful spirits and was a source of good cheer to all; he was much beloved. Mr. Smith had helped him with the football team that "Dan" was very keen about; they had had some excellent games. While I was in Rouen I had been shocked in taking up the *Times* to see Dan Bradby had been killed; I rather think it was the same engagement where this Mr. Smith had got wounded, and one of the last persons who had spoken to him after he was wounded was cheery "Dan."

Christian and I wended our way down for lunch after a peaceful happy morning. I asked him if he found this visiting the Hospital rather depressing, and he replied it had exactly the reverse effect on him, it was a very sunny specimen. We did like the sister in Edmund's Ward, Sister Dowling, so much, such a nice-looking smiling girl, she always gave one a warm welcome and had done much to make my visits to Edmund very happy ones ; there was always a refreshing cup of tea for one, and I gather this was not given to visitors in every ward. I was so proud to introduce Christian to her and to the excellent chaplain Padre Stallard. Edmund told me afterwards how everyone had liked Christian. Whenever it was possible the men in the wards were carried out in their beds into the sunshine outside. I don't know that they always appreciated this. Perhaps it may have been that they were sometimes left out a little too long, after they had got tired, and that the glare wearied them, or perhaps as they all had lived out in the open for months on end, walls and solid buildings had a charm for them; certain it is the majority didn't like being in the open as much as one liked seeing them there. To Christian and me and others visiting them, there was a happy fresh-airy look about the men with their red-rug covered beds lying out in the sunshine, and these nice English girl nurses moving about amongst them. I lunched with C. C. C. at his Hotel that Thursday, afterwards we went to the office near the " Hôtel de Ville " where pass-ports were extended, where the Military (British) were in authority. Christian had had to report himself there on arrival and we now called to hear about the troop train to take him back to his Battery on Friday when his 3 days' leave would be up. We got no information that day, but when he went round next morning, Friday, they said there would be no train till

Saturday. The C.O. at the Hospital, Major Irwin, had told me he could give Christian an extra week's leave if I wanted him to stay on (as I knew he had done for others), but when I told Christian this on his arrival he wouldn't let me ask for it, he said if he stayed it would mean they would be short-handed at the Battery, and it was awfully good of them to have given him any leave ; he must push off when it was up, *if* there was a train. Our friends at the Hostel said, often men were held up and could not get back to the line for days. We longed, or I did, that there might be no train available, but there was one on Saturday. We were thankful for the one extra day, however.

We generally used to go to the fruiterer's in the Rue de Grosse Horloge to get fruit to take to Edmund, he enjoyed strawberries, which were just coming in. Either this Thursday afternoon or on Friday we went round to a most delightful bookshop in a little street (off to the left at the opposite end of the "Rue de Carne," to where my "Rue de Juifs" ran into it). There we found English books, most alluring sevenpennies ; I gave Christian some to take back with him, he also annexed a Kipling or two. He had asked Hilda Wiggin to tea with him at his Hotel that day and went back there while I went on to enjoy Edmund's company ; C. was to join me there with H. W. later on. I was talking to Capt. Heaton who was Edmund's Medico, about him, and as to the advisability of my leaving on the following Sunday. I saw Christian and H. Wiggin walking up through the bit of entrance garden, and asked Capt. Heaton to give them a hail, to jodel or shout to them that I might join them, for I was standing a little way off in front of another part of the Hospital. To my amusement Capt. H. refused to make a sound, as he said he was

far too self-conscious and shy to do anything of the sort, and had always been a sufferer from shyness. To the visitor to the Hospital, the Medico is such a Potentate, that one imagines him able to bellow like an Ox or turn Cart-wheels, if the fancy takes him, without his being in the least ruffled, or anyone else either. But I supposed I had asked him to do a very unprecedented thing, and I hurried after Christian and H. W., soon catching them up. Hilda Wiggin was introduced to Edmund and went to see him several times after I left.

I think Christian and I must have left with H. W. and probably went for a stroll along the hill above la Rue de Puits Communs, probably also we went and stood in the Cathedral Square and watched the throng always to be seen pouring through it, a wonderful sight, French soldiers, English soldiers of every rank and regiment, Australians and Indian soldiers ; the latter with their great turbans and picturesque dress seemed to emphasise the vast variety of the Forces gathered together in France with the one purpose. It was a great procession, marching along on foot, for one never saw a carriage or wheeled vehicle hardly, the trams were the means of transport ; everyone walked abreast along the streets, where no trams ran. The fact that we had been for a visit to Rouen in the Easter holidays of 1914 with Maurice, Cicely Fforde, and Agnes Carver, made it seem more homelike to Christian and me.

On Friday morning we went for a delightful walk, right up the hill branching off to the right of the Rue de Puits Communs ; it was a warm sunny day. We sat under a hedge for a short time alongside a pleasant country road and enjoyed the views over Rouen. Christian would carry my cloak, dark blue with rather a gay striped silk

lining, and would say with a laugh: "I wonder what sort of a uniform they think it belongs to." C. insisted on taking me to lunch when we came down into the town again at the "Hôtel de la Poste"; he said it was impossible to leave Rouen without having done so. It was très cher and full of Staff Officers, a most awe-inspiring place, but it was an excellent lunch we got, and we enjoyed the fun of it.

In the morning before going off for our walk we had shopped in the Rue de Grosse Horloge, gone to one "Felix Potin" that the Hostel people had told us of. There we bought a nice chicken, which the kind Hostel people had said they would have roasted for him to take with him next day; we also got biscuits, and a capacious basket to pack these things in. I got one like it which I brought home with me. That afternoon we again went to our old friend the fruiterer's and got the usual fruit for E. A. M. I wanted Christian to take plenty of fresh fruit with him, which I knew he loved, but he would only consent to my buying him dates; when I again urged apples, etc., being taken—"*Dates*" he shouted; it was the only sign he gave of what he felt at the leave being over. I know an immense longing must have possessed him to be coming home with me to see all the home party before the end of the holidays. After this use of "Dates" as an expletive, he never showed in the least that he minded, and, *as always*, was smiling and cheery to the last. However, next day I saw that he did take apples too. He and I had discussed the advisability of my staying on longer in Rouen with Edmund, as the Hospital authorities were quite willing to let me do. Christian was strongly of opinion that I must give up all idea of getting back before the end of the Easter

holidays and should stay on with Edmund as long as I could. I had unfortunately begun to feel ill (I hadn't been well during the winter); I was afraid of knocking up and being a trouble to the hostel people, so at the end of C.'s stay I had to tell him that for this reason I felt it was wiser to start home on the Sunday after he left. It was very disappointing to give up having the extra time with Edmund for such a stupid reason. Anything that C. wished me to do I naturally felt strongly drawn to, also the thought of what had happened in the Whitworths' case was very present in my mind; supposing that after I left Christian was wounded and sent to No 2, how dreadful to have *just* left. I told him what Capt. Heaton had said about E. A. M., that he didn't feel he could take him off the "dangerously ill" list—the "D.I." list as it is called; but he had added: "If he had been as well as he is now I wouldn't have put him on it." There is a superstition in Hospitals about their being taken off the "D.I." list, so often they seem to get worse then and have to be put back. I felt not too happy at leaving Edmund while he was still on that list.

We went up to the Hospital that afternoon of course, and spent it with Edmund. We thought him looking better. A very nice man in the Warwicks, by name Toot, had been put in the bed next to him, a very cheery fellow suffering from "trench feet," the son of the vicar of a church in Smethwick near here, and Christian thought his cheeriness had helped E. A. M.—anyhow it must have been pleasant to have such a sunshiny man alongside.

That evening I remember Christian's having a long talk with Mrs. Naldrett; among other things they discussed Browning, whom they both loved. I had asked the Orderlies to let me have a hot bath on that evening (a few days

before when I had thought Christian would have had to leave on the Friday), and it had to been gone through with. *Now* it seems such waste, not to have had every moment of the time with C. The improvised bathroom was up the stairs a little way up from the lounge, and as I waited while the hot water was being fetched, I leant over the banisters and talked to Christian and Mrs. Naldrett, who were sitting alone by the Stove talking ; C. came below the banisters and talked to me. Next morning C. went off to find out from H.Q. when the reinforcement train was due to leave and heard it was to be in the afternoon about 3. We heard from Mrs. Naldrett how to order a taxi, such things being seldom seen or heard of ; she had had one when seeing her son Harold off. We went to the Hôtel de France and saw about getting C.'s things packed, and saw to "last things." The evening before, we had gone hunting about for the E.F.C. and C. had gone in and got some needs supplied there ; we ran into 2 Australian Gunner Officers doing the same, who had been at No 2. I expect as usual we were at the Hospital seeing Edmund in the morning, when Christian said good-bye to him ; we lunched at the Hostel, and then went round to the Hotel afterwards to see if all his things were ready and put into the taxi which we went off in to the Gare Rive Gauche. There was an immensely long troop train standing in the station. Christian had his "fodder" basket in his hand and jumped on to the foot-board of the train, peering into the windows of the carriages to see if he could get a seat ; we were walking along the railside of the train, the footboard was high up ; as I watched C. he looked like the figures of Mercury one sees, the lithe active young figure poised on one foot, the other thrown out behind him. It was some time before he could find any-

where to stow himself; when at last he found a seat he put in the basket and coat to mark the place, and we walked round the front of the train and down the platform, to read the labels affixed to the different parts of the train, and find out if he had put himself in the right part; he also spoke to some officer in charge. Finding it was all right and he was where he ought to be, he came out of the station and walked a little way with me to see me off; he left me by one of the Bridges. It had certainly been a most ideal time, we had so enjoyed being together, the weather lovely, Christian always so thoughtful for one, so loving and unselfish. I went straight away up to the Hospital to see Edmund and to say good-bye to him, as I had settled I had better leave next morning, Sunday, April the 29th, after just 12 days in Rouen. I disliked leaving Edmund very much. I can recall how I was lacking in that cheeriness we all tried for during the War, especially when saying good-bye to Padre Stallard, who asked after Christian. I had to say I had just said Good-bye to him. Everyone had been so kind to me, I was sorry I was leaving such a choice company.

Miss Campion, commandant at the Hostel, wrote to me the following May, 1918—she had just been seeing Molly Creswell, who passed through Rouen: "I was so terribly sad to hear from Miss Creswell about your boy, a very precious person to England. I do remember him so well, with such a rare charm one could not ever forget."

30.4.17—1.30. P.M. MY DEAREST MUM. Behold me at the war again. I stuck to the train till about 8 A.M. on Sunday, changed, had breakfast in quite a nice little

town, and heard the division had not moved. At the next station I heard they had, and were on the march, so nobody could tell me where they were. I had to choose between going back to the nearest local base or pushing ahead and trying to strike them somehow. So I pushed on as far as the train would take me, and then got lifts in lorries until I finally found the battery in bivouac, prepared for action next day, at 7 P.M. on Sunday night. Never have I enjoyed a night's rest more! We have just had a distinctly picnic lunch on a hill-top, and we go into action to-night. At least one avoids an anti-climax by coming right into the war like this, and I really am not sorry to get back to the elemental life again. One cannot do without it after a time. It's like drink or something! I do hope you had a safe and comfy journey back. I wonder when I shall hear. Well we have had a jolly good rest, and *I* have had a delightful finale (Samuels was in Paris at the same time) and now we are back at the measly hun in great spirits. I don't know what I should have done without the basket of provisions, the remains of the chicken are still acting as a strategic reserve. Any amount of love to the family from CRICK.

1.5.17.—9. P.M. MY DEAR DAD. New Zealand (nearly). I am writing this in the midst of wars alarms, and at the bottom of the very deepest dug-out I have ever seen. We are now doing our bit in THE latest battle, and all things considered we are not sorry to be back at work again. Country, weather, and our neighbours very much the same as a year ago, but conditions much more à la open warfare. I had a simply splendid little holiday with Mum in Rouen,

it has made all the difference. We got back to war last night, and the hun gave us a famous welcome (1 killed, 1 wounded), bless his little heart. But these are indeed dark hours for him, and I think most of them are asking how it is all going to end, and as yet they dare not face the answer. I must retire now, as I have to be off on a punitive expedition at 3.30 A.M. to-morrow. Love to Mum, Ada, and the lads, s'il y en reste quelques-uns,

CRICK.

At the bottom of a well-appointed Ger. dug-out.

5.5.17.

MY DEAR MAURICE

Many thanks for yours of the 29th. Rouen was perfectly delightful, I am really fond of it. Passing it going up and down to the line it always seems the next step to home. I have a feeling that somehow it will have a great place in my life. I left the north about 11 A.M. on Monday and got to Rouen 24 hours later (Tuesday), a trifle of 9 hours late. Imagine my impatience as we waited for an hour just outside the station. I succeeded in evading all efforts to dispatch me to the camp, and went to the hôtel de France, got a room, had a bath and lunched with Mum. There was no train back on Friday, so I had 4 clear days. Perfect weather, so you may imagine how Mum and I enjoyed ourselves. Started back to work at 4 P.M. on Saturday, and after a somewhat hectic Sunday struck the battery, who were going into action next day. I cannot say much of course, the fighting is pretty stiff, but we are enjoying it on the whole. Real hot weather here for the last week, we shall have thunder to-day sometime.

Yrs.

C. C. CARVER.

BIBLIOTHECA·BODLEIANA·

6.5.17.

My dearest Mum

I got your letter from the port yesterday, and am hoping to hear that you are in England to-day. It certainly was a most delightful time and we shall never forget it. A sort of little oasis in the desert of war. I feel now more than ever how very unworthy I am of the love you lavish on me. Somebody once wrote that "a few men are born worthy of their mothers, but hardly any die worthy of them." I often think how true it is. Apart from the happiness of having been with you, there is a great deal of help in the feeling that there is that English life and atmosphere so comparatively near one. Having seen all those English girls at work down there one gets a broader view of and a more personal participation in England at war. We found things here very much what we had expected from the accounts in the papers. It is thought that the hun wanted to do a slow retreat on this front during the summer, probably finishing somewhere near the line of the Meuse, what time he forced Russia into a separate peace by driving at Petrograd. However the unexpected happened in Russia, and it soon became obvious that if he didn't pretty soon do something on the Western front, he was going back considerably faster than he had intended. He decided what we intended him to decide, to fight a terrific battle on the Western front, leaving the East to look after itself. So we have the Germans putting up a desperate fight all along the battle line, desperate because behind them lies the chasm of defeat. We are fresh from rest and at the beginning of Summer and so we can play the game of war with a certain zest. The great thing is that we are "a happy family" as long as the Major is there.

I suppose the lads will be back at school some days when this arrives. My love to Dad and Ada. Et beaucoup pour vous, CHRISTIAN.

A nasty dug-out.
10.5.17. 10.30 P.M.

MY DEAR HUMP

I commence this letter under very unpromising circs. I am bored to extinction and very annoyed with the miserable brigade H.Q. for whom I am doing Liaison work. And the worst of it is you would not appreciate the extreme bitterness of my lot were I to retail it. Let it suffice that I 'phoned them at midday to-day to take certain steps about my relief to-night, which they did not take, so me voici, sans food, sans bed, sans everything! What should we do if the hun did not make good dug-outs for us (I am now in one)? All these German dug-outs are on the same plan, 2 shafts about 25 yards apart, leading down some 30 feet underground and connected at that depth by a corridor. Very safe, but the atmosphere is a revelation.—And one is apt to become

"A haven of rest
For the alien guest!"

This particular burrow is inhabited by a cat, left behind by the boche when he departed in haste. It has recently become the proud mother of a considerable family, who are the subject of some controversy. What nationality are they? They were born of a German mother, on French soil, and in an English colonel's tin hat. Upstairs a number of booms, crashes and shakes indicate the Ger. idea of fun. He gets lots of that sort of fun, though. What a crooked, topsy-turvy time. Now I was made to be a

thinker rather than a doer, a dreamer, an idealist say, not a man of action. Everything went as per schedule till I was 18, and since then I have tasted danger and adventure, and much as I dislike it sometimes, yet life without it would seem hopelessly dull. In fact after the war, I feel certain that I could not enjoy a peace existence without occasional little wars, expeditions up the Amazon and to the North Pole and so forth. I only hope they will be forthcoming. A melting pot in very truth. We men are hurled into the cauldron of war and emerge as something different. Restless, fierce, with the lust of adventure, a perpetual unrest in our blood. I can feel that I have been through the moulding process. For a long time I merely disliked war, the ugliness, the dirt, the blood, and I was horribly frightened of shells. Now I don't particularly mind shells, and I enjoy the work and the danger and all this great game of chance and skill. A throw back to the primordial primeval beast, I suppose. War has lifted us out of the ordinary course of things, one sees one's surroundings and one's social layer as from a distance. For instance, here I am in France fighting Germany. I know most of this part of Europe pretty well, and I know a lot about the hun, and something of the French. And I am in complete sympathy with my surroundings and the people I know out here, and I have a definite rather technical job to do. But I belong to a place called Birmingham. Nobody there knows anything about my work, or in fact the work of the Armies as a whole. I know perhaps a dozen families, but for the rest every house contains a different style of existence, a source of interest to be investigated if one feels dull.

12.5.17.—We are now out for a week's rest in a village recently destroyed by the hun. It is very sad to see all the fruit trees cut down, poor things, they are flowering away bravely for the last time.

I have just seen your letters to Mum. I am so delighted to hear Bonhote is back ; give him my love, will you ? Yrs.

C. C. CARVER.

12.5.17.

MY DEAR DAD

By Jove, war is almost worth it in this sort of weather, and I am enjoying the hard scrapping in a kind of way. We have had a moderately hot time, but our usual luck has held. The Wagon line play cricket every night, and so do we all now for we are out for a week's rest. The two balls you sent me last summer are seeing very hard service. I wish you would send us out a couple more balls, and if there is a bat about the place, we should be awfully glad of it (per M.F.O.) as our second bat is very far from complete.

12.5.17.

MY DEAREST MUM

The battery are now enjoying a week's rest in a recently destroyed village. All the fruit trees have been cut down but are in full blossom nevertheless—rather pathetic. Of course all the buildings are blown down ; what a savage swine the hun is. Somehow one must see this sort of thing to appreciate what an impossible creature it is. How can one make any terms of peace with a beast who carries off the inhabitants of dozens of such villages as this into bondage and then razes them to the ground. The weather is beautiful and we play cricket every evening. The local

town here is a wonderful place for meeting people you know.

15.5.17.

My dearest Mum

I got yours of the 10th and 11th to-day. There *IS* something irresistibly comic about the reports. Christian, the turbulent fellow, and Maurice the good little boy. Miss Lotka never refers to me as a little boy—it is "the boy!"[1]

I need hardly ask you to send me *A Diversity of Creatures*, Kipling, as soon as you can get hold of it for me. I have been going through a series of dull books lately. *The Expensive Miss Ducane* was the only one I felt like getting interested in, and I went and lost it half way through. We are alongside G. A. Millar again; he is now a Major, O.C. 4.9.2″ Hows., and I have been over to see him, and this evening he panted over here on a motor-byke. A sterling lad, I am very fond of him. We have had a splendid week's rest, and have played cricket every evening. My bowling is positively brilliant on the type of wicket we get. Heaps of love to all from Crick.

18.5.7.

My dear Maurice

Prepare to be bored, for I never felt less like inditing in my life. The country round here is rather an enigma—I think, because the social life has been utterly wiped out from it. On the one hand you have the front, which is

[1] Miss Lotka's reports which I came across and sent over for him to see again. Christian and Maurice began their education by joining a little class which she taught before they were 6 years old till they were 9.

always the same, a place of shells and dust and every kind of scrap, and on the other there is France, the place of the French. But this is a half-way land. Not knocked about at all, but every kind of human habitation, every bit of human handiwork has been destroyed. The people are carried off, and such as still survive in hunland will probably never come back to these ruins of evil memory. The land is not properly French, nor German, and only superficially English. There has been a set piece of human life hereabouts for 2 thousand years and more and it has been wiped off the spring time countryside, and is all to start afresh. There is a sense abroad of things finished coupled with a sense of things as yet unborn, above all a feeling of utter desertion.

Too mentally paralysed to write any more fantastic rot.
Yours C. C. CARVER.

20th May, '17. 10.30 P.M.

MY DEAR DAD

I got yours of the 16th to-day. Many thanks. I am keeping very fit and enjoying the battle on the whole. But it is an acquired taste. Leave has just opened again so I am beginning to entertain hopes of getting home somewhere about the end of July or early in August, but nous verrons.

So glad to hear Hump has got his young guard ; I hope he really does something in the cricket line. I agree with Maurice that there is much more polish and style about Naish cricket than there is about Rugby cricket of the same standard. I had a most amusing letter from Bonhote a few days ago, giving a vivid idea of life at Rugbeia as it is just now. An excellent number of *Punch* this week, don't you think ? I came back from peaceful Wagon line land to the

Battery this morning, and we have had a long day of battle, as the papers will probably tell you. Is it possible that in this our great hour Russia may back down? It seems unthinkable but I suppose it has to be faced. Much love from CHRISTIAN.

20.5.17.

MY DEAREST MUM

Yrs. to hand up to the 16th. What I should do without the family log I really can't imagine. *Re* cakes, I think we had better drop them altogether; if we feel an irrepressible desire for them we can always purchase them at an E.F. canteen. But we are very hard up for something to read, there are such long hours in the 24 when one wants to seek oblivion. I am reading *Quentin Durward* at present, and doing well. You know I really think *Peter and Jane* is the dullest book ever printed. In desperation we have all had a shot at it but it remains unconquered! Would you send me out a cheap edition (Everyman) of Shakespeare (visible swelling on the part of the Swan of Avon!). It is fearfully hot to-night so I will give up this trash. Heaps of love to you and Ada and a' from CRICK.

26.5.17.

MY DEAREST MUM

We have just moved into a new fighting home, as I had hardly finished my last letter to you when we became the devoted objects of such a "hate" that we decided it was "pas assez bon" and it was a case of "git up an' git." I have just put in the 4 most strenuous days of my lazy life, digging solidly during the hours of daylight, and I have now the satisfaction of seeing us pretty safely under France, in

dug-outs to the design of C. C. C. I have very much enjoyed *Quentin Durward*. I wonder if you would send me *Ivanhoe*. I believe it is supposed to be good! *Quentin* is particularly interesting, as the scene is of course not far from here. Would you send me out 2 thin shirts and 2 sets of thin underclothes, the weather is beautifully hot. *NOT* new ones if there is anything else which would do. I heard from Rowbotham the other day from Salisbury; did I tell you he had gone to the R.F.C., and is at home training as observer for a month. I miss him a lot, and I wonder where we shall next run across each other. Heaps of love from

CHRISTIAN.

26.5.17.

MY DEAR MAURICE

So glad to hear you and Hump are doing such execution in Countings II. What a good show getting into touch with H. A. L. S. again, an excellent youth; remember me to him when you write. I wonder if he is still the irrepressible buffoon. I am afraid there is no chance of leave this term, much as I should like it. Had it been possible I should certainly have put up with Bonhote for a couple of nights or so. I was awfully sorry to hear about M.H. House and Stokes, and even more so about A. T. Greg. The Obowden Smith is a bombing officer of peculiar energy and ferocity, and Millar hears from him occasionally. I have lots of letters to write, so que je switche, CHRISTIAN.

29.5.17.

MY DEAR ADA

I have never answered any of your letters, which is too bad of me I admit. Later. I have just got the letter of

25th written by you for Mum. I am very distressed to hear about her illness, and especially as she makes no mention of being better at all. Let me know exactly how she is, won't you? It is at times like this that one feels the eight days or so required to get an answer, so exasperating. Love from CHRISTIAN.

29.5.17.

MY DEAREST MUM

I am so awfully sorry to hear you are ill, and thank you very much indeed for the letter, Ada being amanuensis. . . . I only wish we could all be in the house, but with a love like ours it does not matter where we are. I liked *Quentin Durward*, and I have most thoroughly enjoyed *A Diversity of Creatures*, much of it is real gold of the sort which perisheth not. At present I am enjoying *The Duchess of Wrexe*, which is I think awfully well written. I am keeping very fit and enjoying the game. So glad to hear of the satisfactory negotiations connected with Edmunds' home-coming. Buenas Nojes, me Madre, Schlafen Sie Wohl, Au Revoir, CRICK.

29.5.17.

MY DEAR DAD

Thanks so much for sending the cricket things (will let you know when they turn up), they will be a tremendous asset. I have been absolutely revelling in *A Diversity of Creatures*, quite as good stuff as he has ever written, I think. I am keeping very fit, and all things considered continue to find war tolerable. Nothing like a really hard winter to make one appreciate small mercies in the summer. How are you?

In this glorious weather I imagine The Policeman's lot is now a happier one, and likewise the V.T.C.'s. I asked Humphries, who is now on leave, to get me the 2 records which got broken, so I won't trouble you till I hear rumours of another rest, for most of our present collection are undergoing the hardships of war in a marked degree. Things seem to be going fairly satisfactorily don't you think? The Italians are doing good work; the U. vermin seems to be getting taken in hand; Russia, one hopes, is bracing up a bit; and we have several strong cards in hand we hear. That second spot is a mighty long time arriving. In the April list I was 56th out of 1440 regular 2nd Lts., so it will surely be along soon, with a substantial ante-date to January or so into the bargain, I trust. This is a very dull letter I fear, but one mustn't write much about the game, assez intéressant though it be. Much love from

CHRISTIAN.

I thought "Zero" in *Punch* of the 23rd was rather fine. It expresses what one so often thinks at that chilly and expectant moment.

3.6.17.

MY VERY DEAREST MUM

I am awfully bucked up to hear from Ada on the 29th that you are better. When you are on your pins and about again I want you to do me a special favour. And that is to go slow a bit, "we must—*ALL* accede to the principle of conservation of energy." *PLEASE* don't rush about to so many fusty old meetings and please don't leave the house before 7 A.M. without having had breakfast. Et hoc genus omne. Will you? We shall all feel so much happier if you will. It

knocks the backbone out of things so when you get laid up. It was just like me to forget your birthday—I generally remember things at odd times, but never by any chance when the crucial moment for writing them arrives. Weather perfect and I am keeping very fit. Heaps of love to Ada and your beloved self. From CRICK.

I feel now more than ever I did, that your prayers are a very real protection to us, *something* is guarding us in a wonderful way.

10.6.17.

MY VERY DEAREST MUM

I am so pleased to hear you are better. I am enjoying 4 days' rest at the Wagon line at the moment, not that I need it but it is my turn. Our horses are looking splendid, and my blacks especially. A peaceful life down here, one gets into A— occasionally where there is an excellent bathing establishment, and a good club has just been opened. We generally play cricket in the evening. Thank you so much for all the books. I wonder if you would send me *All Things Considered*, by G. K. Chesterton, sometime. Get better quickly. Much love from CRICK.

MY DEAR DAD

Ever so many thanks for the shirts, etc., books and cricket things, all of which have arrived safely. What a strange ending for the old bat I had at Naish! Great rejoicings here over the show up North, the boche higher command must be having some nasty moments. Love from CHRISTIAN.

13.6.17.

My dearest Mum

Thank you so much for your letters. Awfully glad about Clifton and R. B. T. K. I was amused to read in the paper the other day that Algeciras had been shelled from the Rock. I bet somebody gets hotted for it. Things here are much as usual, we see a lot of the airmen whose "drome" is just across the way, Samuels and I dined there last night. I am enjoying *Ivanhoe*. "The Adventures of an Ensign," now running in *Blackwood*, is an extremely true and vivid account of the Somme battle about the time we returned from the North. We went to see some Tanks at work the other day; 3 of the monsters indulged in a cross-country race, which was assez intéressant. I think a Tank race will be a great feature in times to come. What wonderful times we do live in! I go in to the local town (cloth) every now and again, there is a quite excellent bath establishment, a good E.F.C., and a nice club; what more could one ask? Heaps of love from Crick.

How ripping if you can get to West Runton. I shall so much enjoy it by proxy.

13.6.17.

My dear Ada

Many thanks for your most kind letters. Of course when I left Mum in Rouen I thought she would get home and lie up for a bit. I believe she intended to but was misled by a temporary recovery. Anyhow you must be adamant against any premature attempts at activity, and if you think a word in season would be any use just let me know. I bet Francis had the deuce of a birthday! Do you remember

my first birthday at Naish? I have a recollection of standing on the window-sill of the old 3rd form room with the honourable Slade and waving to you in the night nursery of "the cottage." Wasn't it rough luck Pip Pinsent being shot down,—it is appalling how many fellows one knows who have gone out lately. I wish we could persuade Mott to try for Artillery. Yours C. C. CARVER.

15.6.17.

MY DEAR OLD HUMP

I started writing a letter to Francis, got on to the subject of Aeroplanes, and wrote such a lot that I have decided to bore you with it instead. Touching the subject of Aeroplanes then, they are our principal form of relaxation, cricket and footer absolutely don't touch it from a spectacular point of view. The hun doesn't show much sport as a general rule; he flies, as he himself admits, purely out of military necessity; and when he does fight it is usually "police" work against our aggressive patrols well over his own lines. But he has a travelling stunt party, commonly known as "Von Bülow's circus," who consist of some dozen small red fighting tractor biplanes (single-seater) who travel up and down the line from Squadron to Squadron, heartening up the ordinary pilots. We had 'em down here on our front for 10 days, and I think they were glad to go! Any evening at about 7.15 this is what you see. 2 or 3 2e.'s calmly tulling up and down; these are Artillery machines, and their job is to avoid a fight if possible and spot boche batteries firing, turning our guns on to them with wireless. Then there is the usual protective patrol of 4 F.E.'s; these are slow large "pusher" biplanes, and by reason of their good shooting facilities are useful for breaking up hostile forma-

tions ; they usually keep our side of the line. Next there is a formation of Nieuport Scouts who are fighters pure and simple, fairly fast tractor biplanes, single-seaters, who make frequent sallies over hunland. So much for the regular traffic. Way up above there is a mixed grill of aerial Autolyci waiting for a chance to pounce on something, consisting of a triplane or so (dreaded more than anything by the hun, fast single-seater tractor triplanes, very good climbers and stunters, manned by the naval air service), 2 or 3 Spads, and some De Havilland's Scouts.

Punctually at 7.30 there is a distant growling and the "circus" puts in an appearance. 10 little red planes flying close together who wander up and down over the boche line once or twice while they see what we have got out against them. Our machines fire a few rounds to call each other's attention to them and then carry on as usual. Some of the Autolyci mooch off over hunland to create a counter attraction. Presently the "circus" are unpleasantly aware that they are within range of "Archies" (Anti-aircraft guns) and that our F.E.'s are coming at them majestically—they hastily get in more extended formation. There is some desultory scrapping but nothing very exciting. This happens every night for a week, then the "circus" decide it is time they kept up their reputation and made an impression. I often think that the days of chivalry and single combat have come back to us a hundredfold in the modern air duel. We are sitting outside the dug-out next evening, enjoying the sunshine and a temporary freedom from molestation by the persistent boche "obus," when there is a rattle of machine gunfire overhead, and the "circus" are over us in force. Profiting by a temporary absence of our scouts they are trying a sally against our Artillery machines and captive

balloons. The wicked little hun machines are very gaily painted ; the wings are white with the black German cross on each, the body bright scarlet with a broad blue, green, yellow, black or white stripe on each. The usual boche method of attack is a sort of endless chain business, *i.e.* the leader comes up behind the quarry, dives on him firing, wheels out of the way, the next dives and fires, wheels, and so on, till by the time No. 10 has done his bit No. 1 is ready to take on again. One of our 2e.'s is the objective, but "Archie" puts in some nice shooting which frightens off all except the leading three machines. The 2e. suddenly notices No. 1, the pilot does a nose dive, and the observer opens up with his Lewis gun. They go on duelling for 3 minutes, the 2e. wheeling and diving gamely to try and keep all his opponents under fire. Just as things begin to look bad for our plane there is a whizz and a roar and our scouts are on the scene dodging in and out of the huns who are now back in force. This is where the real battle starts. The observer's gun on the 2e. has jammed, and our old enemy No. 1 disengages from the main scrap to finish her off ; thinking he is absolutely safe he gets within 25 yards of her, but the pilot has a trick or two up his sleeve still. The 'bus suddenly "cart wheels" right round on her beam ends, and the pilot's gun catches the hun right amidships, shooting one of his wings clean off and he falls in flames. 2e. goes off home, you can almost see her bowing her acknowledgments to the frantic cheers from mother earth. 4 huns made off home as soon as our scouts appeared, one has been shot through the engine by a Nieuport and is wobbling down towards a forced landing in our lines ; another has been shot from below by a triplane and has already crashed ; the remaining 3 get out as best they can, pursued by "Archie." A

goodly scrap, and we sit down to dinner feeling very elated. Samuels and Humphreys at the Wagon line saw the boche who made a landing, who was dining with our friends and neighbours, the B.E. 2e. Squadron, a well-known boche airman, who stated among other things that he escorted the 16 machines engaged in the Folkestone raid. Yrs.

C. C. CARVER.

22.6.17.

MY VERY DEAREST MUM,

How splendid to see your jolly old handwriting again. My last from you is dated 16th. We are not fighting at the moment, and are having a most enjoyable "sit easy." We came to this rest camp for 10 days, but plans have been changed, and we are not going back to the old place, for which I am heartily thankful. 2 days before we came down a 5.9 pitched in a dug-out containing one of my detachments, killing one and burying 4, 3 of whom had to go away with shock. Sickening bad luck. We have rigged up a canvas plunge bath here and are having a small summer holiday. I seem to spend most of my time rushing about the country trying to buy soda water, etc. for the mess, in my capacity as supernumerary unpaid acting mess secretary. I had a very good day in a town about 25 miles away yesterday, travelling by lorry.

Heaps of love, dear old thing, you can't think how pleased I am you are better. C. C. C.

Reopening this scrawl on receiving yours of the 17th. I cannot help feeling very angry with Bonhote. Why, by all the powers that be, enlist? Why should Bonhote wish to enlist and not take a commission himself? I suppose you

can't blame him, he doesn't realise relative values. No one has a right to enlist through religious or other scruples if there is a chance of his making an officer, now that the country is *most vitally* in need of officers; most certainly not a fellow cut out for the best type of officer, like Maurice.

12.5.17.

DEAR MR. BONHOTE

I heard to-day that you are back at Rugby, and actually our house tutor once more. I am tremendously pleased, and how I envy you, though God knows you deserve it. It must be passing strange to be back in Summertime Rugby, where the fundamental order of things never changes. G. F. and the Lady Matron (!) and the same names in the house though the faces have changed somewhat. To us who were there that Summer three years ago it has always seemed a happy dream. A figment of unreality it must often have seemed to you, and now you are back there, with your work done. Somehow the fact of that brings it all back to me too, so I hope you won't think this mere maudlin tosh, I hardly think you will. We have all found our feet in the scheme of things during these three years. "Just and perfect is the wheel of life, swerving not a hair," is not that part of the Buddhist creed? Three years ago the Beast was in his lair, three years ago I was as far from a man of war as one could well conceive, and three years ago this was a very pleasant happy village, full of blossom and spring and peaceful peasant life. The mark of the Beast is on the place now, for the people are carried off to worse than slavery, the buildings are razed to the ground and every single tree is cut down, and the fruit trees are dying but in blossom. Five short miles away the Beast is dying in his scores and meeting his Maker

to answer for this that he has done in many scores of villages like this. During this last year I have been in the fire with the rest and have emerged as something different. The iron entering into the soul is a very real process, for although the battle here is the stiffest and hottest we have met yet, I enjoy the life and the deed and the danger, and even in some queer way the very fear as I have never done before. Nothing matters compared with taking part in the supreme thing. The Beast is throwing away his men and ammunition with a reckless desperation all along this front. We have been getting a pretty exciting time, and are out just behind the line for a week's rest. There are half a house and one cherry tree left in the village, and we live in the ittey house though it is extremely probable there is a mine or bomb attached somewhere. I see Podmore occasionally, also Sim and Manley and G. A. Millar. I met Haslam this evening, and met Romer yesterday. I have recently been on a 4 days' leave in Rouen, where I met Whitworth (the master) who is slightly wounded and looking very fit. I must say Good-night and Good-luck from yours, C. C. CARVER.

Keep an eye on that young beggar, H. S. M. C. (Humphrey).

6.6.17.

MY DEAR BONNOTE (sic !)

N. H. S. expots et hoc genus omne must be prospering this weather. I have a memory of one at Brandon, where you achieved one of the best jokes of your life. Our branch was the Zoological, because it required a modest amount of work to pass in, and no subsequent interest in Zoology. Our particular enterprise then was entirely connected with bathing, boats, bicycles, but *birds*, no ! We

repaired to Brandon for tea. At one of those long tables was "Puff" & catellites bent on botany. The Greybeard saw fit to engage in some ponderous humour about our interest being chiefly centered in submarine water fowl.

You (politely): "Well! What luck have you had?" The greybeard: "Quite good, we found a new thistle!"

You: "Oh! but so did I, at least it had never been sat on before!!"

A very typical bit of England, that teaplace at Brandon. The stately unchanging scenery and the rather grotesque human element with its buns and oranges.

I have often thought as you do that the Church has failed. The average army "padre" is no good to the average man. We English are an unapproachable lot, and the only way to get in sympathy with a man, and to help him spiritually, is to undergo the hardships and dangers that he does, and by the force of example and a sort of magnetism to give him confidence. But as a rule we don't see a padre more that once a month, and then he contents himself with telling us to do this or that for the good of our souls. The soldier cannot help feeling he has plumbed such much greater depths, is, in fact, so much more of a *man* as God means men to be, than the Padre (thro' no fault of his own, of course) that the advice is lost on him. In a great many things we have passed out of the old order, while the new is still unborn. Take the men of the new armies,—3 years ago they belonged to a perfunctory congregationalism, units in the old muddled business of life. Now they have passed into a Heroic age, and they live and fight in a continual atmosphere of danger and strain. We look to certain people for leadership and confidence, we are worried when

they fail us. So much for material things. Spiritually each man is a religion to himself, he has his own beliefs and doesn't worry much about what the next man thinks. Conditions, relative values, accepted ideas have gone by the board. We are left with 3 things :

A very present knowledge of death.

An instinctive belief in a future existence.

A belief in a God, a Ruling Spirit, of whose methods of working we have some idea from the facts about Christ.

With these we are doing what we can, each man has his own religion, is there a need for anything further? It seems that if a priest is to be of any use he must be a very Super man, the mediocre is no longer of any avail. He must have the power of converting people to his beliefs, he no longer takes orders and finds a flock who simply need admonishing in the way they should go.

We are considering the efficient part of mankind who are fighting out here. If there is to be such a thing as a stereotyped religion in the future, and I don't think there will, it must have an efficient church, a church of *men* who know life better and deeper than the rest. "The Time is out of joint." Well, them's my sentiments. I think we see more or less alike about these things. Excuse all the scratchings, but I rarely manage to say what I mean first time! I hope you will get to know Humphrey a bit, you are both shy people I know. Yours,

C. C. CARVER.

22.6.17.

MY DEAR BONNOTE

I am somewhat mystified on hearing of your suggestion

to Maurice that you should enlist together. Officers are one of the nation's most vital needs, public school men above all. I think you will admit this is so, and under the circumstances you will pardon my exasperation on hearing of 2 people who are urgently needed as officers, contemplating the idea of enlisting together. I cannot help feeling sorry that you took this step without consulting my people, and Evers, who, when all is said and done, has been at considerable pains to get Maurice the means of taking a commission. Maurice is, as you know, of a modest and diffident turn of mind, and this possibly rather unconsidered action will rather spoil this last Summer term for both of you. Surely if you can be the cause of fight in others, as well as a fighter in yourself, it is up to you to be so. I think we are put into this mad life to make the best we can get of it, and to enlist would be to bury the one talent that you have. Two more points—firstly, there is about one chance in fifty that you and Maurice would be able to keep together for more than a month or so. Secondly, you must remember that every possible man who shows any ability, intelligence, or capacity for command has been weeded out of the ranks, there remains the finest fighting material on earth, but it is quite the most unsuitable place for people with intelligence and authority.
Yours, C. C. CARVER.

28.6.17.

MY DEAR BONNOTE

I am vitally interested in the question of you and Maurice joining up, so please give up any idea of "pestering" me about it. I have had lots of letters giving your point of view, and M.'s point of view, and Mum's point

of view, but it seems to me they all miss the essential thing, which is England's point of view. England, old friend, wants officers. When one has seen the things that I have seen one gets to feel that England (by which I mean the English) is the only thing that matters. I am convinced that we are fighting for the right, for everything with an upward tendency, against the dark forces. Very greatly is the time out of joint, and the one thing we can do is to give our best to England and stick by that. If ever any man should be an officer you are that man. There are some hundreds of men that as an officer you will help, sustain and encourage. Believe me, Bonhote, if you enlist you will not have the chance. I do wish you could have my short experience of Army things, in order to realise how utterly incongruous the idea is. Your job is mainly a question of influence over others, is it not? In an army there is only one possible kind of influence which can be countenanced, that of those in authority. In the ranks you would necessarily always be up against those in authority, and the struggle would be unequal besides being harmful to all concerned. Well, old bean, these are my firm convictions and at least one humble person will be bitterly disappointed if you enlist. The idea of your considering my last scrawlings as a "lay sermon" strikes me as being nothing short of ghastly. A sermon is necessarily hortatory and God forbid I should attempt such a thing. As a matter of fact you know I never look upon you as a clergyman, or a schoolmaster, or a missionary, or any of these established types. You and G. F. and some others always seem too broad somehow for any established rôle. I start writing a letter to Bonhote, get on to Clergymen, abuse them, post the letter,

and suddenly remember that he is by way of being one. You are *of* them but not *one* of them as it were. The question you raise seems to loom up immense and insoluble, doesn't it? I agree absolutely with what you say. It seems to me there are two forms of sin, of the spirit and of the body, and that the greatest of the latter is less than the least of the former. The Spirit endures for ever and "hell fires" are needed to get rid of the lines in it, such as cruelty, intolerance, in fact everything which causes unhappiness in others. But our bodies we leave in some sort in this mad, muddled lovely world, and I think the sins of the body are largely punished in this world. When all is said and done they are due to weakness. Nature unrestrained, the offending Adam not whipped out, the tendency to evil we are born with not headed off. For such things we suffer much here and let us hope that counts for something afterwards. Prostituted minds are very common, especially, as you say, just now, as such I think they are incurable. It is the problem of the age, and the secret is to get to the root, in fact education. Train the young idea cleanly from the beginning, in due time telling it what to guard against. But for any sake let us cut out this secrecy business. Those who might give enlightenment keep silence and the job is left to the prostituted mind. Yrs., C. C. CARVER.

3.7.17.

MY DEAR BONNOTE

Just got yours of the 27th. As you surmise I had a worrying day, and on returning to the "Nisson" hut in which we dwell while out at rest, I found the post awaiting me. The contents completely knocked the wind out of my

sails. I immediately sat down and wrote copious and ill-considered letters all round. So hastily indeed that I neglected a rather important " " of which more anon. I hurt you, and believe me, old bean, I am heartily sorry. If in this troubled world you ever have need of a friend who is absolutely certain that whatever you do is a good and noble thing to do, then I shall feel mighty honoured if you will consider me in that light. I feel the aforesaid certainty so strongly that I never thought about mentioning it, "and therein came the rub" perhaps. I most fully appreciate that "greater love hath no man than this," to leave the pathway of his life and journey forth into the only real and utter loneliness, that of the mind and spirit.

"A stone's throw out on either hand
From that well ordered path we tread
And all the world is wild and strange."

But yet I cannot help thinking that the greatest good of the greatest number is the first consideration. Are we judged by the amount of good we do or the greatness of the sacrifices we make? Both, I suppose. But when it comes to a choice of one or the other—what then? What a riddle life is. The world is progressing towards the Kingdom of light, and we are put into this world to work in this world, and by our work to help it to progress, don't you think so? Let us consider the case of "Mrs. Smith (entirely fictitious)." I have perforce corresponded with many such, and I am strongly of opinion, that she would rather you "one of them parsons" were Tom's officer than his fellow soldier. That is if she knows how many are the material and spiritual advantages you can put him in the way of as his officer, which you could not as a soldier. Also we

must consider Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Jones, Mrs. 'iginbotham, and a score of others whose sons would not have the chance of "that Parson's" good influences were he a private, but would if he were an officer. What a horribly serious and dreary affair this letter is! One or two more things yet, however, but you have my sympathy! I ask you to believe that I did not regard your proposal as selfish, and I think you did Maurice a great honour by asking him to join you. Now for that miserable " ." The sentence on page 3 should have read like this. To enlist would be to "bury the one talent that you have" [garbled quotation from the N.T.—Talent = piece of silver (!)]. Meaning to say that by your personality you would help Tom, Dick, and Harry when you enlisted, but that would be akin to burying your personality, for by taking a commission you would help several score of Toms, Dicks, and Harrys, and "render up the talent an hundred fold" or words to that effect. Got me? Well, Cheer thee ho! old bean. Forgive and rend in pieces the livery letter. Yours, C. C. CARVER.

I hope to sleep a night with you on the way home sometime soon.

22.6.17.

MY DEAR OLD BOY

I am absolutely in blank amaze at hearing of Bonhote's suggestion. Good God, he might at least have asked Dad and Evers before suggesting such a thing, instead of deliberately running against their wishes and the work they had done. It really does make me feel wild, old lad. I can only account for it by supposing that he suddenly made up his mind to fight, decided he ought to start humbly, and

without a moment's sane thought on the subject made this proposal to you. You both want to serve and to do your best. The weak joint in our Army is the junior officer. Instead of being a public-school man, the majority are fellows who are not really up to the job. We depend entirely on the minority from the public schools to keep the show going. My dear old bird, the need is much greater than you or Bonhote realise, at least I think you *do* realise. What possible objection has Bonhote to taking a commission? You know that a fellow like yourself, with the best training England can offer, makes a better officer in a week than a man with 20 years' service in the ranks? There is no possible doubt about this, believe me. It is the old old principle of "Noblesse oblige." You have had the best the old country can give, now it is up to you. *YOU CANNOT DO YOUR BEST BY ENLISTING.* We want officers, and want them now, to become an officer by anything but the quickest way is criminal folly. I hope to God Bonhote will do the same. Well, so long and good luck. CRICK.

22.6.17.

MY DEAR DAD

I am awfully sick on hearing of Bonhote's suggestion to Maurice, as you must be. Officers are our weak point, all these gallant fellows who are not gentlemen (or rather not public-school men) never make such good officers as the genuine article, and then one hears of top-hole material like Maurice being encouraged to enlist. It is too utterly short-sighted and silly. Surely he might have trusted men like Evers, who have given their life to it, since the war started, to use their own judgement. Apart from everything else the

army is so constituted that there is about one chance in fifty they would be able to stick together for more than a month or so. "Lord what fools these mortals be!" However there is no use being annoyed about it as I am confident that there is not the slightest chance of this folly coming to pass. We are enjoying a rest for a week or so prior to a change of scene. Love from CHRISTIAN.

To Maurice.

24.6.17.

MY DEAR OLD BOY

Our letters crossed, cela va sans dire. To answer in detail—I certainly do not think from letters to me that Dad is ever likely to be converted to the idea. I must say I quite approve of Dad's attitude, he is absolutely certain, as I am, that it is the right thing for you to take a commission, and he does not propose to rehearse the reasons which have brought him to that decision to any old body who comes along. This is by the way. Evers, G. F., Dad, and yrs. humbly, do not assume that *ALL* public-school men make good officers, but we do assume that the average one does, and we know that you are certainly not below the average. 6 months in the ranks would be 6 months' waste of time, which at this hour is unthinkable.

The situation is this—you are on the verge of a plunge, and like everyone else you feel naturally apprehensive. Never having had any experience of the job, you cannot picture yourself as an officer, and so think you "will make a hopeless one!!" You think that because you are not in touch with the men you ought not to be an officer. You are in fact afraid of the difficulties and responsibilities of an officer's job, and you want to take the morally broad and

easy path of the ranks, where you are nobody and have no difficulties and responsibilities. Just as when you were going to Rugby you would doubtless have preferred to have stayed and been educated at home. It is simply that you have not got the confidence and sense of proportion which will come later. Now, how on earth could you or any other fellow at a public school, or Sandhurst, or Woolwich be in touch with the private soldier? My dear old bird, how *could* you be? Nobody expects it, the private soldier least of all. Look here, *My own general*, a very distinguished soldier, himself admits that he has never been in touch with his men from the very beginning. It is not essential at all, although it is a great thing, and I am damned sure you will do it. As for an indifferent officer now, not being better than a good one in 6 months' time, that, my bhoy, is where you make your blooming error. And in any case a new officer now without experience of the ranks, will be more useful in 6 months' time, than a new officer in 6 months' time with experience of the ranks. There was not much wrong with the pre-war regular officer who went in knowing nothing about his men, it was the fact of being absolutely different that made his men respect him. As for officers not being wanted so much in winter—Gee! Let me refer you to Haig's account of last Winter's fighting; —his first duty is to look after his men, and they never need it more than in Winter.

If you go into the ranks you are being false to your order, that is to your God, your school, your people, the men who would have to be led by somebody less suitable, and any other old thing you can think of. You were put into the world to fill a certain purpose, you get the best home and the best training anyone could have, and it is up

to you to see that these things do not go for nothing in the hour of need. You see, old boy, I know you have the stuff in you, and any amount more besides, and I can't bear to think of your not going for the best simply through want of confidence. It is not good enough for me that you merely relinquish the idea, and take a commission while you really think it is your duty to join the ranks. I want you to see that one is right and the other wrong (or at any rate not *SO* right). Here endeth the hortatory epistle of C. C. C.

We are out at rest just behind the scene of our last 2 months' endeavours. Having a splendid time prior to going in for a perfectly different venture elsewhere. Yrs.,

C. C. C.

25.6.17.

MY DEAREST "OLD UN"

Thanks mightily for yours of the 19th and 20th.

For "Clifton and R. B. T. *K.*" please read "Captain Clifton Carver, D.S.O., R.N.R., and 2nd Lt. Richard Barrett Talbot Kelly, M.C. (military cross), R.F.A." Is that all right now !

I am disappointed that you do not tell me the arguments which you see for Maurice enlisting with Bonhote. Personally I do not see any at all,—after long and considered thought no, I cannot see *one*. Are you looking at the question broadly enough, Mum ? It is not M. F. Carver his particular little destiny at all, it is England, and what she requires of him. Here we have a fellow who has had the best home and the best school any fellow could have. He is absolutely sterling stuff to start with, has been trained in authority and consideration for others. Is he to throw these things away when England asks for

them, and asks for them in her hour of need? Is he to go into the ranks where just those qualities which Maurice has and are wanted, are absolutely useless? My dearest Mum, this is not my solitary opinion, it is the conviction of any public-school man, any thinking man out here or at home. In this hour and place we must ruthlessly cut out any false sentiment about friends enlisting together. Practical common sense is what we all need now.

You make me feel a perfect hog when you wonder if I have enough to eat,—why we are living like fighting cocks (what does a fighting cock live on, by the way?). We had a little horse-show the other day in which my blacks left the lists with flying colours. I am much lamenting my Patsey (the mare that used to be Wager's) who had to go away to an "'orse 'orspital." I have been through a most trying course of impossible 2nd chargers, to the great annoyance of Sparke my groom, who has to ride them! But I think I have something suitable at last. Heaps of love to all from C. C. C.

25.6.17.

My dear Dad

Thank you so much for yours of the 19th. I enjoyed *Ivanhoe* but I don't think I like Scott much really. I shall not rest content until I have convinced Maurice of the error of his ways. You and I are as certain as we are certain of anything that he should become an officer. JOIN THE RANKS, Oh! ye Gods and little tiddly white-bait! A fellow like Maurice with a head like that, and his training in authority and everything that goes to make an officer, actually thinking of throwing it all away. To me it is absolutely inconceivable. If it had not been

for you and G. F. and Evers to throw cold water on the scheme, he, M. F. C., might have rushed off into Lord knows what idiocy. Maurice wrote me a long letter giving a full account of everything and asking my opinion. I need hardly say he got it! The pièce de résistance of his case is (1) He feels completely out of touch with the men he would have to command (!!!) (2) It would be a pity to miss such an opportunity, as enlisting with Bonhote. As for (1) how on earth he or any other embryo officer could be expected to be in touch with a class he has never had anything to do with is beyond my humble wit at all events.

And (2) as he has no tie of relationship as officially recognized, the chances of his remaining with Bonhote are practically nix.

I must say I am not satisfied at his merely relinquishing the idea, I want to see him convinced it is the only thing to do. I have written to Bonhote on the subject fairly strongly. Your very affectionate CHRISTIAN.

29.6.17.

MY VERY DEAREST OLD MA

So glad to hear you are getting on steadily. There is a chance that I may get a leave in about 10 days or so. If so I think of staying the first night with Bonhote at Rugby, having a look round, and coming on home next day, bringing M. and H. with me if I possibly can. What do you think of the scheme? Of course it is impossible to say when I shall get away.

Must post now, heaps of love to Aunt F. and all. Yrs.,

CRICK.

1.7.17.

My dear Maurice

There is just a chance that I may get a leave during the next 10 days or so, and if so I should like to spend the first night at Rugby, putting up with Bonhote, and going on home with you and Hump next day. You might take soundings on this latter score, and we will make a combined and determined offensive, should the scheme by any chance come off. They are pushing off on leave very quickly just now, for we have a large allotment in order to clear off the unfortunate soldiers who have not had leave for 2 years. Thy Hubert.

3.7.17.

My very dearest old dear

Comment ça va avec vous aujourd hui? Je vous remercie mille fois pour votres lettres bien intéressantes—said he, knowing the language and by way of relieving the monotony.

Yes, we are still in the rest camp with the plunge bath —but "sic transit etc.," it is now full of green weed, and not without odour. We go to-morrow, and we shall finish up a long way from these barren heaths and rolling downs I have no doubt. Saturday and Sunday were dismal days of driving rain and mist but yesterday was one of Summer's own, and for me at any rate a very parfait gent-tille drop of time. A tonneau vide de bière had to be returned to a delightful little town some 40 kilometres away, and so at 10.30 A.M. the cask and I set out on a ponderous and well-liking lorry. We arrived just in time for lunch. The hôtel des quatres fils is one of the nicest I know and these meatless days spur it to the very greatest

efforts. After lunch I took the cask round to his spiritual home, and departed amid a chorus of "bon santé's" from the genial inhabitants. Some shopping was successfully accomplished and I had tea, chocolat et cerises, des petits gateaux aussi.

The feel of the country was too strong for me and I went for a walk through one of the most beautiful stretches I have run across out here.

A good dinner and so home and all merry, with the comfortable feeling that this day at any rate, so far as one can tell, "we have fallen into no sin neither run into any kind of danger."

Heaps of love for my dear Aunt Fanny, and any jolly old amount for you. CRICK.

9.7.17.

MY VERY DEAREST MUM

I am very much afraid my leave is off. I am the next to go in the brigade and I just missed going from the part of the country we have left. We are in a new place now and there does not seem to be any leave going. Sickening luck. It is so difficult to know what to do. If I don't give you any warning it may be very inconvenient, if I do it probably leads to disappointment. Thank you very much for the birthday letters, I am looking forward to the books. The Footes were as apt as they always are, I expect you advised *The Student in Arms*. We have had a most delightful march and France is looking her very best. We are still en route, and at the moment are close to the place where we were resting when you were at Rouen.[1] To-morrow we go on to a place where we

[1] Hazebrouck.

stayed last August.[1] Well, I hope my leave will come along within the month, at any rate.

Books just arrived, thanks so much for them, a jolly good lot.

Written some days later.

Arrived at our Destination and back at the war in earnest. I have been worried at not being able to get this letter off; you will have been expecting me, I am afraid. I ought to have gone on the 7th, and it was not till the 6th when we were already on the march and I could not post a letter that it was cancelled. I don't particularly mind for myself, for leave is more enjoyable after a battle than just before one. I wish I could tell about our doings and adventures, but of course it is all a sealed book. Well, goodbye and bless you, my dearest old Mum, I am sure your prayers will help us in the days to come, as they always have done. Heaps of love from CRICK.

11.7.17.

MY DEAR DAD

Many thanks for your birthday letter. Yes, these 2 years have been pretty full of adventure, and the next few months bid fair to beat the lot. We have been marching since the 4th and have just got back to the war on our new front. Things are very amply lively here! I ought to have gone on leave on the 7th and it was not till the 6th that it was definitely cancelled,—as we were on the march I could not let you know. The truth is the only thing to do is not to give any warning at all but just arrive, but that might be so ridiculously inconvenient. However

[1] Near Ypres.

I will try and get away early in August, if the battle is not raging too furiously. Love from CHRISTIAN.

13.7.17.
(*and* a Friday !)

MY DEAR OLD BOY

This is a letter which I always approach with * reluctance, that is, just before we sally forth into a battle. Midnight to-night is the appointed hour, and the spot is no health resort. However, I have always bobbed up smiling out of these horrid places, and I hope to continue to do so. This is the most famous spot on the front, and this is one of the liveliest times. I have apparently just missed my leave, which is a pity, but it is nice to think that when we get out of this bloody murdering battle I shall be pretty well the next to go. Boche air-craft are tremendously active here, and are trying to imitate our tactics. This entails coming over after dark and dropping bombs promiscuous like. Quo facto they empty their machine guns at random over the countryside. Spectacular but not very effectual. I have been enjoying some of John Buchan's books. I recommend *Salute to Adventurers*, *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, and *Greenmantle*, if you have not read them. I have just read *The Riddle of the Sands* again too. We had a top-hole 10 days' march up here, country simply exquisite. The finest sort of travelling there is, I always think, marching with the first day-light, getting into a completely new place at midday and spending the night there. They are undoubtedly the finest days we get.

There is a little piece of hill country half way down the front I am particularly fond of, it is so English.

* Reluctance because suppose it should be the last—what a rotten one !

Well, cheer thee ho! old buck, and a merry journey along the road. Yrs., C. C. CARVER.

13.7.17.

MY DEAREST MUM

Juist a bit scra' before we sally forth into the battlefield. So glad about John Keen's M.C. I think all these Airmen deserve a V.C. at least, would get it too if we went by pre-war standards. This is a very critical time everywhere, one cannot discuss much, but just stick by our jobs as well as may be. I quite hope my leave may be along in a week or so. It is just as well I didn't get it, as I shouldn't like to be away from the battery just now. One enjoys such a lot of sunshine and good fellowship, that one feels ashamed not to help the old firm along through the rainy days. How beautiful that edition of the Omar is. If I could paint I should make a picture of September 15th, or some such battle day. The moment when the first wave stand on the parapet amidst a waste of shell holes, looking towards their fate at dawn.

> One moment in annihilation's waste,
> One moment of the well of life to taste,
> The stars are setting.—

It always seems to me so appropriate. Heaps of love from CRICK.

13.7.17.

MY DEAR LOUIE

Thank you so much for your annual great kindness. *The Student in Arms* was a most happy thought. This

birthday was celebrated under rather more peaceful circumstances than last year, but we have a sufficiently exciting time ahead of us I fancy. I wonder about you when these air raids come off, they must be very disturbing. Your affectionate Godson, C. C. CARVER.

19.7.17.

MY DEAREST MUM

Comment ça marche avec vous, bien alors? We are taking part in an immense Artillery battle, the like of which has never been seen before. No one-sided affair this, but two strong opponents going bald-headed at each other. Fritz, D. Hundog, is slowly but surely going to the ropes, though he is a great fellow for taking punishment, and is still putting up a stiffish fight. The division is in the same Corps, etc. as we were with for our best achievements, which is a great incentive. The story of our recent adventures must wait till I get home. I have seen Major Budden once or twice lately, he was slightly wounded the day before yesterday, but is still with the battery. Manly, a fellow in his battery I was at school with, was killed yesterday, not very cheerful for old Carroll when he gets back from leave. When Major B. went to the palace for his D.S.O. he was next to Clifton, R.N., and had a talk with him! We are situate on the banks of a considerable lake, a pleasant spot in peaceful days I imagine, but now somewhat over fraught (how on earth *do* you spell that?) with war's alarms. Old Humphries has retired from the scene of hostilities with a baddish go of dysentery, and Samuels has strained his ankle, otherwise we are all very fit. Well, my best beloved old Ma, "merrily o'er the Stile-O" does it you know. Tons of love from CRICK.

19.7.17.

My dear Dad

What do you make of the signs of the times? I believe the Prussians are certain that Peace or disaster is inevitable within the next few months. I believe they have definitely renounced the idea of an unvictorious peace, and they have got the armies going absolutely all out against ourselves, the French, and the Russians, so that by August 1st or thereabouts they will be able to spoof Germany that they are well on their way to a victorious peace. There is not much kick left in his infantry, but the Artillery and Airmen put up a good fight. You will have been disappointed about my leave, but at this crucial time I feel everyone ought to be at his job. We have had 2 fairly exasperating "gas" nights, helmets on for 3 hours about. Much love from

C. C. C.

21.7.17.

My dear Aunt Maggie

Thank you very much for your birthday letter. It arrived with the rest of the mail on a particularly beastly night, at about 11 P.M., and was a very present help in trouble. The Hun has a confirmed habit of gassing us hereabouts, usually at night, and the dark hours seem very long when one can only sit and wait and think. At such times I often think of all my friends who pray, "Lighten our darkness we beseech Thee oh Lord, and by Thy great mercy defend us from all the perils and dangers of this night," and the thought helps to give tranquillity and self-control and loyalty that we may do that which "Thou hast given us to do." Letters are the greatest blessing then. Our life here is light and shade—we have some very happy times, and of

course there are some dark ones. These must be if we are to attain to the great good that is coming to us through the glare of battle.

22.7.17.

A glorious summer day here, it seems a waste to have good weather when one is condemned to holes and trenches, but it makes the said holes very much pleasanter. I am so glad old Edmund is going on well, he is one of the very best, isn't he? I ran across him by accident in the depths of last winter, and we had a long talk about things. When I last saw him in Rouen he was looking very different, poor old bird, but that is over now. Mum is better too, as you know, though she had a very close call, I am afraid. She will leave the house at unearthly hours of the morning for early services and such things, and buzz all over Harborne. . . . However we said, "Do you think at your age it is right?" and she is taking things easier, which is so much to the good. Reading this over it sounds a paltry morbid effort, but I assure you I am not really morbid, and I am very much in love with a Gunner's life. Your affecate nephew, C. C. CARVER.

22.7.17.

MY DEAR MAURICE

It seems a long time since I heard anything from the old hole,—though I am expecting to be thoroughly strafed by Bonnote pretty shortly for harping on the theme of his taking a commission. This, to put it mildly, is a most damnable, bloodsome spot, the wretched field batteries seem to get everything that is going—and there is plenty, yea, even up to 8″ obi. We shall all be glad to get on and over

and out from it. I am reading *De Profundis* by Oscar Wilde by way of light literature! There is such a lot of this infernal waiting and wondering if the next one will have your number about this job. The nights are peculiarly beastly, gas usually, and shells always. But these times of trial and danger certainly bring out the best in people. You get down to the truth which is the best kind of beauty. Thank the Lord I am now certain that my Major is the right stuff. Well, cheer thee Ho! old bean, yrs.,

C. C. CARVER.

To the Mother of his Groom.

22.7.17.

DEAR MRS. SPARKE

I have just heard with the utmost dismay that your son Driver J. Sparke, who has been my groom for nearly 2 years, has been wounded. I am hoping it is nothing serious, and will let you know details when I get them. I do not know what I shall do without my cheery little Sparke, for surely there was never a better man with horses, and I shall never have such a groom again. Unless, as I sincerely trust, he comes back to us again—the sooner the better. By a most extraordinary coincidence he was hit on the same road on which your other gallant son was killed, perhaps almost on the same spot. Perhaps this is the first you will have heard of it—in which case it will come as rather a bomb-shell I am afraid. However I daresay it is all for the best, and you may have him with you shortly—let us hope so at any rate. He was taking ammunition up to the guns at the time, a shell fell among the pack horses wounding him and two other officers' grooms among others. A horrid war when such things happen. I had better send you

cheque for money I owe him, that will be the surest way. Believe me, nobody could sympathise more with your anxiety than I do, and I remain, yours sincerely,

C. C. CARVER, 2/Lt. R.F.A.

If there is anything I can do please let me know, addressing to C. C. Carver, Esq., R.F.A.
A/83rd Bde., R.F.A.
B.E.F.

On Tuesday afternoon, July the 24th, we received the following telegram at Harborne: "Regret to inform you that No. 17 Casualty Clearing Station reports—July 23rd. 2/Lt. C. C. Carver is dangerously ill, shell wounds thigh and knee, further news sent when received, regret permission to visit cannot be granted."

No news came all next day.

On Thursday morning we got the second wire telling us he had died on that Monday night.

24 *July* 1917.

DEAR SIR

I am afraid I have very bad news to tell you. Your son Lt. C. C. Carver died of his wounds last night. He and his Major (Major Bowen) were hit by the same shell on the morning of the 23rd, and your boy was wounded severely in the thigh, which was fractured, and also slightly in the knee. Our Doctor (Captain Ball) was on the spot and looked after him at once and sent him off, so that your boy was in hospital in a few hours and had every attention, but I believe it was the shock that killed him. He was a most charming young fellow and everyone liked him, and we all, officers and men, mourn his loss. He was, I think,

very happy in his battery, and it is very sad to think that such a promising young officer has gone.

If there is anything I can do please let me know, and please accept my very real sympathy. Yours sincerely,

T. O. SEAGRAM, Lt.-Col., R.F.A.

Posted July 25, 1917.

July 24.

DEAR MR. CARVER

I deeply regret to say that your son 2/Lt. C. C. Carver died here of wounds in the left thigh and knee, at 10.50 P.M. on July 23. He was only with us a few hours and was very weak. He had just strength to ask me to tell you that he was slightly wounded. Everything possible was done for him. I was with him when he died and commended his soul to God. It was very peaceful and altogether he suffered very little. He and his Major were very badly hit at the same time. The latter is now in a critical condition. Your boy took it all splendidly and never murmured. His body lies in the Lyssenhoek military Cemetery (Plot 13, D 21) [This should read Wittenhoek, Plot 13, D 22.—Note by F. C.] 2 miles S.W. of Poperinghe. God bless and sustain you in this great sorrow. Yours in deep sympathy,

D. M. SALMON, C.F.
C. of E. Chaplain.

17th C.C.S.
B.E.F.

From Capt. Carroll, R.F.A.

29.7.17.

DEAR MRS. CARVER

I must write you a few lines just to tell you how terribly sorry I was to hear of the death of your son from

wounds received in action. He had been in the old battery (D/84) with me from the time he joined in June 1915 until we split up in December 1916, and I had come to know him well and to become very fond of him. I have lost in him a very good friend and the Army a very capable and efficient officer with a most promising future.

I expect you will have heard the details. At first your boy's wounds did not appear very severe and we all hoped he would pull through, but I am afraid he must have suffered too much from shock. The news of his death came on me as a very sad blow; the sacrifice of such a good fellow and one so young seems doubly hard.

I know how idle any words of sympathy must seem, but I feel so much for you in your great sorrow. Your son lies buried at a little village called Wittenhoek quite close to Poperinghe; I hope to be able to go over and see the grave when we come out of the line.

With my deepest sympathy to you and all your family in your great loss. I remain yours very sincerely,

G. C. CARROLL.

P.S.—Please do not bother to answer this letter, I know how disinclined for writing you will feel.

From Major Budden, D.S.O., R.F.A.

July 27th '17.

DEAR MRS. CARVER

I just can't tell you how deeply and truly I feel for you and yours in your grievous loss. I have only just had a note from Mr. Carroll telling me the sad news. It was the first inkling I had had. It is a great blow to me. I was always so very fond of Christian and admired him no end, both as

human being and as a Soldier. He was always so cheery and entertaining, so conscientious about his work and duty, and ever ready for a dangerous bit of work. You know that I tried my utmost to get him back to my Battery when I came out here again. I worried the General and my Colonel over and over again, until I realised my efforts were hopeless. I wanted him because I knew his worth and because I wanted to know him better. There was such a tremendous lot in him which did not appear to the ordinary observer. There was a great depth which I never fathomed but was anxious to do.

I wish I could have been with him at the end. I saw him only a few days ago when he walked some little way with me, as cheery and bright as could be. It was seldom I did run across him, but to me each meeting was a delight. We were such a happy four in the old Battery, would that we could all have remained together. We had promised ourselves such happy reunions in the good days to come, but now, though some of us may still be spared to meet in Peace yet, all pleasure will be gone. We will find a blank which will never be filled. I am writing now to Mr. Carroll and to Christian's Battery to ask about the funeral, and needless to say I will do my utmost to be present when he is laid to rest. It is difficult at the present moment to get away from one's Guns, but I do hope I may manage it, and if I succeed I will write again to tell you about it and any other particulars which I may be able to gather. . . . If there is any little thing I could do for you please do let me know.

Yours very sincerely, E. BUDDEN.

Aug. 1st '17.

DEAR MRS. CARVER

I am so very sorry to have been so long in writing again. I hope you will make allowances knowing that we have been hard at it in preparation for one of the most extensive battles the World has ever seen.

I went down from the Guns to-day after writing to you, in order to find out about the funeral and if possible to attend. I was too late for the latter, but was able to find out where Christian had been buried. His Grave is in a large military Cemetery at Wittenhoek, which is about 3 miles South West of Poperinghe. I did not manage to get out there, much as I wanted to, but I hope an opportunity may arise before long, and if it does I will tell you of my visit. I understand that Major Bowen was buried at the same place. The only details which I have so far heard are these. Christian and Major Bowen were standing together outside the former's dugout or shelter. They heard a shell and jumped for the dugout; unhappily the shell fell on top of it. Christian was hit in the thigh and Major Bowen had both legs shattered. From what I can hear they were hurried down to the dressing station and then on to the Clearing Station at Poperinghe. I believe that Christian's death was due chiefly to shock. Major Bowen died as the result of complications after both legs had been amputated. I have no doubt but that you have already heard from Capt. Samuels, and that he is arranging for the dispatch of Christian's belongings. I trust these will reach you safely. I need scarcely mention that all those who knew Christian and whom I have seen since his death have expressed the deepest sorrow and sympathy. He had many friends and admirers who will miss him sadly,

and not one of them more so than myself. Yours very sincerely, E. BUDDEN.

11th Sept. 1917.
Palestine.

DEAR MRS. CARVER

Bowman has just written me the sad news about Christian, and please accept my sincere sympathy. I am most awfully sorry, and so must all D/84 be. . . . Bowman said you were very brave, and so must you all be.

C. C. was not eighteen when he joined the battery, and he was so full of the enjoyment of life that something has gone very wrong when such a young life has been cut short.

You must have heard, of course, how keen he was on observing, and days on end he took on the dangerous job on the Somme and would not allow himself to be relieved. The infantry, especially the East Surreys, came to have such confidence in him, that later when we wanted him to come in, they would not let him. The Brigade Major of the 55th Infantry Brigade asked Col. Blois to keep him up, as his reports were so reliable. Since those days he must have done lots of good things, but as I never went back to France to fight since I left Hospital I know not of them.

Poor Carroll is the only one left in France now, and I hope he will get through all right, and I wish Bowman would come out here where those devilish gas shells are not used by the enemy; some one here heard that Major Budden's wounds were not serious, and if this is so Mrs. Budden must be very happy to have her husband out of the fight—he is another reckless man, and should be kept away from the front line. I hope next time I am in England I

shall not be so unfortunate as last time, and meet you—because the best year I ever had was that first one in France—the happy family of Don battery at Meaulte—and Suzanne—and the pretty villages of the Somme Valley.

Please also tell the others of C. C.'s family circle how very deeply I sympathise in their very sad loss. Believe me, yours very sincerely, H. GRIFFIN.

P.S.—On re-reading this letter I find I have not nearly expressed my feelings, and I do not think I am able to tell you how very sad the news makes me.

7th October, 1917.
No. 3 London General Hospital,
Wandsworth, London, S.W.

DEAR MRS. CARVER

Thanks so much for your letter and the photograph of Christian, it is such a good one of him. Yes, Major Bowen was certainly one of the very best, there can certainly be few like him. He used often to say to me how he hoped nothing would ever happen to your son, and it seems so strange that they should have been hit together. I myself used often to think how dreadful it would be, as your son seemed so young to be even in France. I remember what fun we had teasing him on his 20th birthday, we shared the same billet. It is hard that both he and Pinhey should have died—both so young and such lots to look forward to—whereas I who am much older and could easily have been spared, gets off.

I don't know when I shall be fit again—they told me yesterday that I have to remain here for at least six weeks, sometimes I think that I shall never be fit again.

Christian told me after his leave had been cancelled before

moving up to Ypres—that he was very sad about it, as he so wanted to see you—you had been ill—and that he felt sure that he would never see you again—I told him not to be silly. He again told me the same thing the last time that I saw him—the morning of the 16th of July. I took up some ammunition to the battery and then went to his "Dug out." I was then rather ill and was evacuated to Hospital that evening.

I just tell you this as his thoughts were always of you. Yours very sincerely, HARRY HUMPHRIES.

[Capt. Humphries told Mrs. Blacker that Christian always kept up a very cheery front, especially to the men.]

17th October 1917.
No. 3 London General Hospital,
Wandsworth, London, S.W.

DEAR MRS. CARVER

Thanks so much for your nice letter. I am only too pleased to tell you all that I can of our last rest out at Hendecourt—it is about 10 miles S.E. of Arras, and we were on a field just outside the copse where the station used to be (it was all in ruins). The 2 Brigades were together, 82nd and 83rd. Our battery had a hut and 2 tents to live in. We divided up the hut into two rooms, one for messing, and in the other half Christian and myself used to sleep—the others sleeping in the Tents. We put up jumps and used to have jumping every afternoon. Christian had a funny little pony—and I remember how pleased he was the first time he got it over the wall jump. We also fixed up a plunge bath, there was just enough room to dive in and splash about. We used to get up at 5 every morning and have great fun

in it. D——, a brother officer, would never go in, so one morning we lifted him out of his tent and put him into it. Major Bowen also helped us in that escapade.

There were lots of very nice rides about and we often used to go out in the afternoons, we also played cricket and football, and had several matches against the 82nd and against No. 8 squadron R.F.C., which was quite close to us. The place that Christian used to go to was Doullens. I was running the Canteen for the men, and he used to go in and to buy the Beer and cigarettes for me. The "Hotel de quatre fils" is in the main street, the scenery that he means is just outside—I will tell you how to get there—in case you go to France after the war and want to visit there (go straight past the hotel over the river, then turn to the right, there is an Avenue—go straight along it, bearing to the left you then go by a hill, in front of you there is an old Fort which is now used as a hospital). I think he must have been looking down from the top of the hill—it is very beautiful, and the country was most beautiful just then.

Now about the march up to Ypres. We left Hendecourt very early on the morning of the 4th of July—it was raining hard, but cleared up beautifully, and we had no more wet days on the march. It was my job to ride forward each day and do all the billeting, so I did not see much of the march, but we used to have such fun having tea in some café before our mess could be got ready. On the first day I arranged a great feast of strawberries and cream, as there was a Fruit Farm in the village I bought some and we had them for dinner. We were all such a merry party.

When we got near to St. Pol we stayed one afternoon and night, Christian and I went into St. Pol and had tea and dinner at a topping little place. I forget what it was

called, then we had a race Home across country. Two days after we got up to Dickbusch where we stayed.

The Guns went into action on the night of the 13th. I took them up, Christian went up to the gun Position on the 14th. I went up twice after 15th and 16th evenings, and went into hospital on the 17th morning.

Now about the Black Section. One subsection of it went out to France with A/83, the other with B/82. A/83's was mine, but I am not sure if Christian had the subsection in B/82. When the battery was made a 6-gun battery, the section came over to us, they were handed over to me and became the left section; about a week after, I left the battery to go to Brigade H.-Q. for a short while and Christian took over. Christian always took a great interest in it, it was by a long way the best section in the Brigade —both for horses and men. A Driver who was on leave about a week ago came to see me, he said there were few of the old lot left, men or horses, it is all so sad.

I am feeling ever so much better to-day, as soon as I am well enough I am going out to the West Indies for a cruise. I have got three months' leave, that should pick me up again. I hope that all this will not bore you. Yours very sincerely,

HARRY HUMPHRIES.

A/83rd Bde. R.F.A.
B.E.F., France.
23.7.17.

DEAR MRS. CARVER

It is with regret that I have to inform you that Christian was wounded this morning. I have just left him in an ambulance, and he was conscious and has every chance of pulling through. He was hit in the top of the leg, and

buried, the same shell hitting the Major. Everyone in the Battery will be sharing your anxiety and praying to hear cheering news of Christian's recovery. Yours sincerely,

J. SAMUELS.

24.7.17.
Same as before.

DEAR MRS. CARVER

This is the most difficult letter I have ever had to write. I left Christian full of hope yesterday, and to-day I have just received a wire to say that he passed away (at the 17th C.C.S.) at 10.50 P.M. 23.7.17, from the effect of shell wounds in the thigh and knee. The duty of informing you would have been the Major's, but unfortunately he was seriously wounded by the same shell. The Major would have told you in what high regard he held your son, how efficient he was and how beloved, not only by his own section, but by the whole battery and all who knew him.

I will not attempt to retail his virtues to his Mother, but of one, all who worked with him can testify. That was his high courage and devotion to duty.

I can truly tell you that your grief is shared by one and all of us, and I pray that the Almighty may send you comfort and that in the days to come you may look back with Pride untinged with sorrow, on your son's death. Yours sincerely, J. SAMUELS.

Same as before.

DEAR MRS. CARVER

As soon as I received the sad news from the C.C.S. that Christian had passed away I wrote to you, but evidently you

received the War Office wire first. The Major also has died. They were both hit by the same shell when inside a shelter. The Battery rushed up and dug them out with all possible speed, and they were soon on their way to a field Hospital near the Wagon lines, where I went and saw them. The Doctor gave me hopes for them both, providing they could recover from the shock. The Major's wounds were the more serious, as he had both his legs broken, but being the older man and of not quite such a delicate temperament as Christian, he was bearing up better. The awful waste of promising lives is the greatest tragedy of the war. The youngest, brightest and best seem selected by an inscrutable Providence to pay the utmost price in this Great War. I still grieve for my youngest Brother, a lad very similar to Christian, who fell on the Somme whilst flying. The Battery is in a forward position for the great battle, and naturally has been under constant heavy fire. One of your son's best Sergeants was wounded yesterday, I hope not seriously, and the other one has had to be evacuated from shell shock. The Battery is still "carrying on," largely due to the good training and example of the Major and Christian. I am sure he will know and feel pride in the fact that his section is still playing its part nobly. We have already received a splendid order of the day from Sir Douglas Haig, also from the Corps Commander, for the way these forward batteries have stuck to it under these trying conditions. I pray that this may be the last of your sorrows, and that the future will dawn bright and happy for you and all the brave Mothers who sacrifice so much. Yours sincerely,

J. SAMUELS.

Monday (7.8.17 ?)
Same as before.

DEAR MRS. CARVER

As we are having a few hours' "easy" I feel I must write and acknowledge your brave letter. The more one sees the fine spirit of the Folks at home, one perceives the source of strength which carries our men through everything and will eventually give us the Victory we all pray for. We were all expecting Christian to get his second spot some weeks ago. I know that the delay was merely red tape; his work quite entitled him to it. All his kit will be forwarded via Cox & Co., and his private possessions by the department dealing with these matters. His batman, Gr. Salmon, is still with us, and I feel sure would appreciate any little memento; a wrist watch, I think, would be most useful. I am giving Major Bowen's to his man. Of course most of Christian's personal effects were with him at hospital and will be sent from there. His books will go from here. His glasses have been posted to-day. Unfortunately we have suffered further. Pinhey is dead and Campbell wounded, as well as one or two other good fellows in other Batteries. This is to be the great battle of the war, in my opinion. Bosch is going to stand and fight it out. Well, we will accept the challenge, and with God's help will prove our strength and endurance till Victory crowns our efforts. I am now promoted to command the Battery, and could wish for none better, and only hope to prove worthy of the trust. When I am on leave I will certainly let you know, and if I can see you will tell you full details. I should value a photo of Christian's as a memento. Yours sincerely,

J. SAMUELS.

I saw Major Samuels in September 1917. I went up to stay with the Footes in order to attend the Memorial Service at "All Saints," Margaret Street, that Mrs. Blacker, Major Bowen's sister, had arranged should take place in September. It was a Memorial Service for Major Bowen and Christian. Major Samuels was at the service but I didn't speak to him then. I had written to him, and he came to see me at the Footes' that same afternoon. A nice-looking young fellow, fair and blue-eyed, compact and workmanlike in build. Not dressed in uniform, but in up-to-date plain clothes. Their newness and freshness seemed to strike a pathetic note in one's mind, for one realised the boyish light-heartedness with which they had been got, as if the brief leave spent away from battle and war's alarms was to be of much longer duration; it was a Thursday afternoon when he called, and Saturday was to see him going off back into the middle of it all again. I felt how wonderfully good it was of him to give up any of his precious time to me and to what must recall sadness. It had been splendid of him to attend the service that morning. He said that Christian was conscious at first when he was put into the Ambulance at the Battery, but then lapsed into unconsciousness. He gathered this from what he said. He asked, "Have we taken the Montauban Ridge yet?" (This was what he was engaged in, in the Battle of the Somme in July the year before.) I had seen Miss Williams, the Matron of 17 C.C.S., who by an extraordinary coincidence was in Hampstead the night before staying with friends. She had said Christian's face had looked very small and white when he was carried in to the C.C.S. This surprised me rather, and I asked Major Samuels if he would have described Christian as looking so. "Yes," he said. "Then he looked like that rather; all those days and nights under

constant shell-fire and gas had done him in a lot." I asked him of all I could think of, about the journey up, and the bit of country Christian had loved so; but I realised so much had been lived through, event rushing upon event, and all fraught with such big happenings which had wiped out much that had taken place; and quite naturally he could give me no clear-cut pictures of places and doings. I can always call up a picture of *him*, in his grey suit and jaunty Homburg hat, with the latest thing in ties, standing there talking and saying good-bye. He dreaded returning, he allowed to us (Alice Foote and me); probably to his own people he took up the usual cheery attitude as if he were going off to see a cricket match only. He offered to let me see the official account of the doings of the Battery which he had sent in, and which is given here. In reading it one is struck afresh with the wonder that men going through all they were could write coherently, let alone with the thoughtful kindness which Major Samuels had shown in all his letters to us, and I was not surprised that little details of the time on the way up to their position north of Zillebeke should have been forgotten.

On a Thursday afternoon three weeks later from the time I had said good-bye to him, I got a letter from Capt. Carroll from France, dated 6th October 1917, saying, "I do not know whether you will have heard that Capt. Samuels, who succeeded Major Bowen in the command of the Battery, has been killed in action also, together with one of his subalterns (Lt. Rotherham), quite lately joined. They have indeed paid heavily in that Battery for our recent successes." I think he had just been back ten days from leave when he and Lt. Rotherham were killed by a shell as they were doing a reconnaissance.

1.9.17.

To Adjt. 83rd Brigade, R.F.A.

In reply to your F290.

A/83rd Brigade R.F.A. went into action North of ZILLEBEKE LAKE on the night of Friday 13–14 July 1917. At 8 A.M. 15th Major G. E. S. Bowen, M.C., R.F.A., registered the guns preparatory to starting the bombardment on the trenches West of "STIRLING CASTLE." A hostile balloon observed our flashes almost as soon as we opened fire and a 5.9 Howitzer sent over ranging round. At 8.45 A.M. whilst the battery was breakfasting the guns were engaged by hostile destructive fire, which continued throughout the morning. By mid-day five of the six guns in action had been hit direct and about 2000 rounds of Ammunition had been blown up. Major Bowen decided that the position was untenable and dug a new one about 500 yds. in rear. Four of the damaged guns were withdrawn that night, the other one being repaired on the position by the Cpl. Fitter. By the night of the 17th two fresh guns were in action and it was decided to maintain four guns in the line, retaining the other two at the W.L. as reserve to replace casualties. The bombardment of trenches was carried out night and day, the personnel being withdrawn to the Bund of the Lake, which offered a certain amount of cover, whenever the hostile shooting became too severe. The enemy kept the area under constant fire, at times reaching the greatest intensity. The Bosch soon learnt that the personnel of the batteries in this area had their dug-out in the bund, and with great cunning would always finish a severe area shoot by searching the Lake side and thus destroying the gun teams. Each night the area was subjected to

gas shelling, the nature of the ground making this form of counter-battery work very objectionable, as the gas hung about the surface of the lake for a considerable period, and made sleep almost impossible. On the morning of the 23rd during one of these area shoots a 5.9 How. fell on the dug-out in which were the Major and 2nd Lt. Carver. Both were severely wounded and eventually died. Major Bowen had both his legs broken, yet when he arrived at the dressing station, such was his devotion to duty, fortitude and courage, that his first thought was to send for me at the W.L. in order to "hand over." This he did clearly and completely, although in great pain. Both these gallant officers died, Lt. Carver the same night, and Major Bowen two days later. I took over the Battery about midday 23rd July, and the programme of shooting was continued night and day till the morning of the 31st, the day of the battle. During this preparatory period, the Battery fired about 600 rounds each 24 hours. It had 10 guns knocked out, maintaining four in action all the time. It lost the above two officers, 3 Nos. 1 wounded, 1 O.R. killed, and 20 wounded. The Wagon Line delivered 8222 rounds to gun position by wagon and pack. This had all to be done between dusk and dawn under constant heavy shelling and through a nightly gas barrage.

Hostile shelling was fairly slight during the early hours of the battle, but as the day wore on, the area was searched with 5.9 how., 4.2 how. and guns and shrapnel. The latter caused our battle casualties, Mr. Campbell, a Sgt. and three gunners being wounded whilst fetching Am. from a dump to the guns during an S.O.S. On the 6th August, the personnel was withdrawn to W.L. for 48 hours' rest. A complete detachment was killed by one heavy

shell, which fell on them as they were marching out and had already reached the back area. We were in action again by midday 9th. Little change was noticeable in the hostile shelling of the area, and on the 11th the Officers' Mess was hit direct by 5.9 How. Two officers within were buried, Mr. Rotherham escaped with a severe shaking, whilst Mr. Stanley Smith had his arm broken. Both these Officers had joined since the 31st July to replace casualties.

The day after the battle the Brigade suffered a heavy loss, losing Major Farmer, D.S.O., M.C., and three Subalterns with one shell, which hit "B" Battery's Officers' Mess. Lt. Pinhey of my battery was one of the victims, being on a visit to this mess at the time.

It was decided to move the battery forward to a position east of Zillebeke which was not subjected to so much area shooting. The position was dug at dawn Aug. 11th and two guns and 3000 rds. taken forward by the morning of the 12th. The condition of the ground over which the move had to be made was such that 20 horses at times failed to move a gun, and eventually the remaining three had to be man-hauled to the corduroy track by a party of 50 Engineers. In this position we fought the action of Aug. 16th. Five minutes after our opening barrage two gun pits were hit direct by searching fire. The pits were alight with camouflage and ammunition burning, 2 N.C.O.'s were killed and 1 officer and 11 other ranks wounded. I 'phoned Bde. that we were out of action and "Ceased fire" whilst the fires were put out and the wounded removed. The remaining two guns were shortly in action again. A Cpl. and two men working one and two officers the other, whilst the remaining men were away carrying the wounded. The personnel was withdrawn to W.L. for

three days' rest on the 17th Aug. and returned to action on the 21st ready for the fight of the 22nd. The battery was eventually withdrawn from the line on the 24th Aug. Our casualties during the last action being 1 killed and 6 wounded.

In all, during the period July 13th to August 22nd 1917 the battery lost 1 B.C. and 5 Subalterns, 6 Sgts., 3 Cpls. (whilst acting as Nos. 1) and 57 N.C.O.'s and O.R. 10 guns were knocked out so badly as to need withdrawal to I.O.M. 11,302 rounds of Ammunition was carried up by wagon or pack, 9 Drivers were wounded and 43 horses killed or evacuated through shell fire. The guns fired 17,775 rounds.

J. SAMUELS, Major, R.F.A.

This Report was given to me in September 1917 by the late Major Samuels, R.F.A., and has been regarded as confidential till now, January 1920, when the war being at an end it can be made more universally known.

Officers' Mess,
5 "C" Res. Brigade R.F.A.,
Charlton Park, S.E.
August 17.

DEAR MRS. CARVER

I have just heard the sad news that Christian has died of wounds. I am so sorry for you and for myself, as I have lost a good friend and one who is not easily forgotten.

Capt. Carroll wrote me and he is also very cut up. Major Budden is wounded. I am going up to-day to try and find out where he is. I go back to France for service next week and hope to get back with Carroll.

But it will never be the same old happy family as were together in D/84.

You have my deepest sympathy. Yours sincerely,

R. STUART BOWMAN.

15 Squadron R.F.C., B.E.F.
Aug. 9th 1917.

DEAR MR. AND MRS. CARVER

I was most awfully sorry to see about Christian in the paper and must express my heartfelt sympathy to you. I was with him in A/83 till May this year and before that in the 85th Brigade. He was one of the best fellows going. One prays and hopes this will soon be over. I see also by to-day's paper that Major Bowen our old O.C. has fallen, for which I am more than sorry, he was a top-hole man.

Well, please excuse this rambly letter but I hardly can say what I feel.

Again deeply sympathising with you. I remain ever yours sincerely, ROY ROWBOTHAM, 2 Lt. R.F.A.

Aug. 23.17.

MY DEAR C.

I was horribly sorry to hear you've been wounded. I bestrode a motor-byke and went unsteadily to your Div. H.Q., as we are both at rest (thank God), and there I heard you'd been knocked out. I hope you're all right. When is it, and where are you? I devoutly trust it's a cushey one. You seem to have been having a pretty —— time. So have we. Every one has, I think—that siege should be given rest shows (1) how they needed it, (2)

that wonders never cease. But I *should like* to know how you're getting on, and where you are.

The last 2 months have been dreary work, and the men were beginning to shew signs of cracking—Our present spot is a dreary one, and I was thankful to leave it for a while. The spot we are at is a d—d nice one, and I sleep in a sumptuous chateau, in a large room full of stained glass windows with coats of arms on them.—So that I arise each morning feeling like the Duke of Clapham. The country's lovely, a *bit* like your beloved midlands. Not very, but parts of it remind me rather. I see P. M. Musters is killed. I had dinner with him at —— two months ago. Lord, it's a foul business, isn't it? The guns are getting a bit the worse for wear, and don't acquit themselves as well as once they did. Poor old things, they're in a continual red-hotness, or were. I spend most of the day talking execrable French to Madame, or else reading. I prefer this to going round the place having heavy lunches. I'm always grousing. But I think this war is daily getting more and more ridiculous. I see we're going to wear stripes for every six months spent out here. I shall look like a Zebra personally—the idea don't inspire me much. "My" chateau is a lovely spot, with water all round it—rather neglected, but all the prettier for that.

Well, Carver, if humanly possible—if you have any limbs left—to be *thoroughly* cheerful—let me know how and where you are. Or if not depute a henchman or maybe a fair nurse to do the same—Au revoir, yours ever,

GERALD MILLAR.

Sept. 23rd 1917.

DEAR MRS. CARVER

Thank you so very much for your letter. I was awfully fond of Christian, and dreadfully sorry when I heard about it. We were out on rest, and I went to his Divisional headquarters and heard it there. The last times I saw him were down South. He rode over one evening to the battery to see me, and I to his horse lines a day or two before we left the district. I should so like to have a photo if I could. It was so ripping meeting him out here. Why is it that people like him are killed and the others left?

I used to hear from him of Maurice, he must have done very well in the house. I remember him being very upset once when Christian went to the Sanatorium. It was about his first term. We are not so very far from where he was killed. It's not a District which—well, in which one would choose to come and live in. Sometimes it gets rather on one's nerves, but I think the huns are quickly going under. I was on leave a few days ago. I wanted very much to go down to Rugby, but the holidays were on. My last three leaves have been the same—very annoying. I remember Mr. Hastings very well (Tiger). I was a History specialist like Maurice, but I fear not so enlightened a one. He did not like my essays, and his remarks on my style filled me (and my Mother) with despair. Please tell Maurice. My address is 202 Siege Battery, R.G.A., and by some freak of fortune I've risen to the dizzy heights of Major. It's one of the few really humorous things that have happened in the war. I am afraid I have none of his letters. Like a fool I always tear letters up and often repent it. I do now.—But I will have another look. Thank you so much for writing. Yours sincerely, GERALD MILLAR.

To Maurice.

Oct. 2, '17.

MY DEAR CARVER

Many thanks for your letter. You are not presuming, nor do you bore me—in fact it's the opposite thing. I saw a lot of Christian out here, and I wish I'd seen more. He was one of those people whom you'd do a lot for, and when I heard (on leave) that he had died, it rather spoilt my leave. I saw a good deal of him down South at Christmas '15 and then again last autumn and then again this spring. I used to walk over to his horse lines and see him there in '15. He had a black shaggy horse he rode about on, unclipped—I did know its name, but I've forgotten it now. Last autumn I used to pass his battery going up to our observation post and I had tea there twice. One evening he walked back with me to my battery. I remember he'd just come back from the dentist, and I waited for him as he was due back at 5 o'clock. We talked a good deal about Rugby and you (how you were keeping up the reputation among the history specialists). He was almost as amused as I was (not quite) when I became a galloping Major, and used to rot me about my efforts in the O.T.C. when I was a private in the band. Bonhote he was very fond of, and showed me a letter from him once, which I kept for a short time and sent back to him. Last autumn he was not so cheerful as before or after. I saw him the day before Nov. 13th when they attacked on the Ancre, and he was going out with the infantry, full of revolvers and warlike weapons. This last spring he was keener on his job than ever, and said he would stick to it and liked soldiering. He was very attached to his Major. His battery was in rather a dreary spot, and after I'd come up here, he wrote a letter

saying their part of the country was getting on his nerves. (It was the part the bosches evacuated and they'd destroyed everything.) He said that country played a large part in his enjoyment of life—a thing we had in common—and in that letter he mentioned the midlands—Warwickshire—as his ideal country, as there was no outstanding feature, such as lakes, mountains, etc.—and you had to look into it to realise how fine it was. He was very devoted to you and referred to you always as Carver mi., as if he was still in the house.

He had a very good Sergeant-Major, an old soldier with one or two ribbons, and I often saw him. I think he was very attached to Christian. I never met Bowen—I wish I had. In the spring I ragged him because all his battery had had their hair clipped short. His battery were very proud of their horses. Their Divisional Artillery horses had a great reputation.

His Division were at one time the finest out here. Last year they really did wonders. In Christmas '15 they were magnificent. Now, I think there are practically no originals left. They've had a hard time of it, and I think they must be almost a new lot. There were a good many Rugbeians in it.

Write again and tell me how you're getting on. If I can ever be of the slightest use, I will be—au revoir.
Yours sincerely, G. A. MILLAR.

P.S.—Christian was very fond of Kipling, especially *Kim* and *Puck of Pook's Hill.* He had a lot of books with him. He lent me one or two of Maurice Hewlett's, and also G. F.'s last one *For this I had borne him* (wasn't it ?).

He used to talk of Brandon a good deal, and bathing there. He must be a horrible loss to you.

6 Bilton Road, Rugby.
Wednesday, July 25th 1917.

DEAR MRS. CARVER

Maurice came round a short time ago, with the letter from Mr. Carver saying that Christian had been dangerously wounded. I do hope that you will soon receive good news.

Meanwhile I simply want to assure you of my sympathy and prayers in these days. I have been thinking much about prayer lately. Does our prayer really help to make a sick person well, and to help one "dangerously wounded" to recover? Is God blind that He needs to be told of our desires? And I haven't got very much further on the intellectual side. On the practical side, though, we simply can't help praying when we are up against facts and realities; and we cannot but believe that there must be reality in such prayer—the intellectual light will come later. With kind regards. Yours sincerely, E. F. BONHOTE.

P.S.—While Maurice was round here, the 12 o'clock bell went; it is a "call to silent prayer" in the School, and somehow we stopped talking and it seemed to help things.

6 Bilton Road, Rugby.
Friday, July 27th 1917.

DEAR MRS. CARVER

The blow has fallen at last. For the last two days we had been almost expecting it though we all put on brave faces and told ourselves there was every hope. Now that it has come it seems bigger and worse than we had expected. You and Mr. Carver will be so badly hit that

I hesitate to intrude on your grief with this letter. But fools step in where angels fear to tread.

I have just been reading through some of the letters which Christian wrote me during the last few months. You have seen some of them. Grand letters they are. And the grand part of them is that he really felt what he wrote. Two things seem to stand out very clear. One of them is the memory of a green England—"Summertime Rugby"—"it seemed a happy dream"—"the stately unchanging scenery" (I think he carried that dream about with him into the thickest of the fight). The second is the way he threw his whole being into the struggle for right against wrong. "I think we are put into this mad life to make the best we can of it," "The greatest good of the greatest number is our first consideration," "The world is progressing towards the Kingdom of Light, and we are put into this world, to work in this world, and by our work to help it to progress, don't you think so?" "Nothing matters in comparison with taking part in this supreme thing." That was the Spirit in which he lived and fought and died. Translated into other words it means simply the most extreme unselfishness that a man can show—an unselfishness which humiliates us when we think of it—and helps us to imitate it and follow.

I don't think Christian was ever meant to be a soldier in the old sense of the word. I mean he would have been miserable in any war in which it was not so conclusively shown that he was fighting for the Kingdom of Light. No one would hate fighting simply for fighting's sake more than he. Which makes the tragedy all the greater.

And here I have only touched on one side of his life. Of the other side—his extraordinary reverence for his home,

you and Mr. Carver and his brothers—I saw occasional glimpses in his letters to me, and was privileged to see more in some other letters which he wrote. It just shows me how tremendously deeply you all must feel this loss; and makes me feel that for one like myself, outside, to write and sympathise is nothing short of an intrusion—for which you will perhaps forgive me.

Looking back to his Rugby days several pictures rise in my mind. First I remember teaching him in his very early days. He was very quiet and appeared to be dreaming; in reality he took in most of what he heard, and used to go past it into the psychology of the teacher and the taught. Then I remember him on a Sunday morning wandering along the Bilton Road, on his way to his cousin at Bilton, introspective as usual, almost resenting my coming and walking with him. Then a bathing expedition in which he showed himself a little more. Then Maurice's coming to the school, and a visit to their study. At once things were changed. It seemed to bring just that home touch into his school life, which made us see better what was going on in his life. At about the same time there is another very definite picture. He came to me to be prepared for confirmation. (Illness prevented his being confirmed that winter, and he was confirmed a year later.) Most boys on such occasions sit still and listen and afterwards forget. He was different. I remember going to G. F. and saying that here at last was somebody who thought and who had sense and who would think of religion in connection with the things of everyday life, instead of relegating it to Sundays and Church. His letters show that up in the end.

Only a few of us here were privileged to see his great-

ness, and we can't hope to realise it as much as you. It remains for us to assure you and Mr. Carver of our very deep sympathy in your loss—a loss not without its grandeur: for Christian has met his Master at the supreme period of his life—"Greater love hath no man."

Please don't trouble to answer this intrusion. Yours sincerely, E. F. BONHOTE.

1 Hillmorton Road, Rugby.
July 25th '17.

DEAR MRS. CARVER

You will know without my telling you how heavy my heart is. One can do nothing but hope and pray and think of all the boys who have been dangerously wounded and pulled through. But it must be dreadful for you not to be able to get out to him, and no hopeful words of mine can do any good, though I do most of the time feel hopeful. But indeed I do sympathise with all my heart. Yours very sincerely, G. F. BRADBY.

1 Hillmorton Road, Rugby.
July 27th '17.

DEAR MRS. CARVER

I sent the two boys home. I don't think one gains anything by trying to be more than human, and I know how great a comfort they will be to you and you to them. They are not missing anything that matters and they couldn't have concentrated on Exam. papers. I should like to have Maurice back on Monday. There are things for him to do and it will be good for him to do them. But

there is no point in Humphrey's returning and M. can take his luggage back with him on Wednesday. I realize that I ought to have wired to you this morning: but I am so unhappy and muddle-headed that I can't think of things.

I think Christian was one of the bravest people there ever was, because, being so introspective, he was always conscious of the danger and the shrinking of the flesh, and yet was able not to mind. It is all well with him and he has heard the "well done, thou good and faithful servant," which is the consummation of lives like his. Nor do I doubt that he has won the right to serve God for ever and that there is something selfish in one's tears. But there are times, like this, when I feel as if the burden of this war were almost too heavy to bear, as, one by one, the boys who have meant most to me pass to the other side, and leave this side a blank. And yet I know that my own burden is nothing compared to yours, for, though I have loved them all, they were not my children.

You will know how much I feel for you all, because you will know how much I need sympathy myself. It is a great blessing to be with boys because with their warm hearts and immense interest in the present they never jar.

Yours very sincerely, G. F. BRADBY.

THE END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APPENDIX

Lanmas,
East Cowes, Isle of Wight.
9th July 1916.

DEAR MRS. CARVER

Colonel Blois has sent me a copy of the letter written by the officer commanding the Infantry Battalion with which we have worked and fought since we have been in France. It tells of the most excellent work your son did in the advance of July 1st and how useful and helpful he was to the Infantry. I thought perhaps you might like to have a copy too, so am sending one to you. From all accounts the old Battery did splendidly, and that is such a consolation to me in my misery at being in England at this time instead of with the Battery.

I felt quite confident they would do well; the men are, for the most part, good keen fellows, and as for my officers no one could wish for a more splendid lot.

I can't tell you how helpful they have all been to me from the very day they joined me, and apart from that, what good friends and cheery companions. I have all along counted myself as one of the very luckiest.

The day Christian joined was a happy one for me; for I saw at once that he was the sort I wanted, and this first opinion proved to be more than correct.

I have always had the greatest confidence in him and this has been shared by others as well. The Infantry love him and look upon him as more or less one of their own and would like to keep him altogether.

It is a great joy to me that he has done so jolly well in these big times and I am quite sure that he will go on doing well. I trust he and the others will have the very best of luck through it all and soon be in England again for a well-earned rest. I am waiting anxiously for my medical board and have been keeping the wires hot trying to hurry them on.

I hope with luck to get back to France in a few days, and to be in time to play a small part in this great effort. I am afraid though there is no chance of getting back to the Battery. It is Heart-breaking.

Yours very sincerely,

(Signed) E. F. BUDDEN.



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