

Same address.

22nd May 18.

~ ~ ~ To my Sister ~ ~ ~

Dear Mabel,

As I sit in my office, which is the front-room of a French Farm-house my heart rejoices at the thought of being alive and well, and once more away from the din and strife of battle — though the sound still reaches my ear.

As I look through the open window into the adjoining fields and see the lovely nature of God; the Apple-trees in full bloom, the May in the hedges showing white among the greenness of the leaves, and here and there amongst the yellowness of the Buttercups the Blue-bells standing so straight and majestically; while in the garden adjoining the house, the currant and gooseberry bushes laden with unripe fruit, and to hear the hedge birds and skylarks singing it makes one think how good God is.

My mind goes back to the opposite side of the picture where I saw people of all ages streaming along the road carrying all they wish to possess; women leading or carrying children in their arms; Houses that was once and now are only heaps of bricks & stones; trees that was in full leaf, only now stumps; once what was green fields, now ploughed up by bursting shell, worse than any ploughed field; all this caused by the ravages of war. Even where I am now the farm folk tremble at the sound of the enemy aeroplane, and expect it.

to drop its hellish bombs, I think to myself how does God allow it to continue, and why does not the Almighty stretch forth His guiding hand and bring peace once more into the world. No. — His thoughts are not our thoughts, neither His ways our ways. It is said an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, and until His time comes for him to stop the water that drives the Mill — which grinds exceedingly small, so must the war continue.

I expect you will somewhat be surprised to have a letter from "Bill" which has been promised on so many occasions, but the fact is, having so much writing to do anyone gets sick of it. Well Mabel I suppose you will say a bad excuse is better than none.

What glorious weather we are having here it is something grand, and I can tell you we are not half enjoying ourselves. About 300 yards away from this Farm House where we are billeted is a canal about 3 times as wide as the one at home, and running into it are streams about 5 yards wide, one of which runs beside the farm. The Farm people have boats in which they go up into the canal and thence into the town of — about 6 kilometres, and bring their shopping in them back. When the boats are not in use by them they are at our disposal, so you may imagine what fun takes place. There is plenty of fishing, so we have all bought rods & lines and have fishing competitions and then there is cricket, so you see our spare time is fully occupied and we are very tired at bed-time. I sleep in the orchard under an apple tree. Of course

this is the light side of our life, it cannot last too long, it's too good; they could leave us here for - well until the finish of hostilities.

We are living well too. Breakfast:- Bacon & two fried eggs. Dinner:- Roast-beef, baked potatoes and Haricot Beans, Stewed Rhubarb with custard.

Sea:- Fish caught same day, none of those tiny sprats but roach & bream two or three pounds in weight a piece. Who would not enjoy this life. Of course we have to pay for the extras but we don't mind that. The old hymn still rings in my ears. "Count your blessings".

Well I suppose I am settled at last, if they leave me alone. The Division wired for me to join the training staff unit of the 7th Royal Welsh Regt. I know their Adjutant well, but my boss here fought for me tooth and nail and I believe he is successful in getting me to stay. He told the Corps I was doing better work here than if I went back. He is a very nice gentleman, though he comes from one of our Batts. He thinks a lot of his staff and the staff thinks a lot of him.

Rose writes to me and said I look in my ~~tears~~ in the photo, soft soap, etc. I had a Post Card from Billy Deane a day or two ago & heard from a friend of mine who is in the same Batt that Billy is in their Orderly Room. I believe he is only about 16 miles away from me now.

I suppose Devines is very quiet and not many "fit & able" left. How is Mother and Dad. I hope both are well. I have to get a letter from Mother

Please tell Charles the parcel of cigarettes arrived safe to-day, Is this Frosie's parcel I take it it is will write and thank her.

Now come along and pull yourself together and let me have a nice letter from you.

Love to all.

From your most affectionate
Brother
"Old Bill"

