RICHARD VINCENT SUTTON

From a photograph by Lafayette, London.

Richard H. Sutton

RICHARD VINCENT SUTTON: A RECORD OF HIS LIFE TOGETHER WITH EXTRACTS FROM HIS PRIVATE PAPERS.

¶ To Dick's friends this record of his short life is dedicated. It is necessarily incomplete and also, perhaps, one-sided, as the principal material available consisted of letters to me, or other near relations, and refer, therefore, to trivial everyday matters of transitory and probably personal interest only. Yet I venture to hope that friends of a later date will not find even his early letters entirely devoid of interest. He was so absolutely ONE all his life that they will, I think, find the characteristics of the Dick whom they knew and loved in manhood in the Dick of childhood's and boyhood's days.

¶ To those friends from whose kind letters I have ventured to make extracts, in the last pages of this book, I tender my apologies. From one point of view so many quotations may seem unnecessary, since they are so unanimous in tone that one letter might well have stood for all. But it has been pointed out to me that it is this very unanimity which constitutes their value as a record of the deep impression Dick's character and personality made on all who knew him.

¶ I cannot end this "apologia" for my share in the book—namely, responsibility for what is included or excluded therefrom—without expressing my deep gratitude to the friend without whom it would never have existed at all!

¶ To Mildred Isemonger then, who undertook what seemed to me a hopeless task in the weaving of this record, and who has carried it out with never-failing patience and sympathy—for all the work it has entailed, for the time, infinite trouble, and loving care given by her to present a living picture of my beloved son, I offer my heartfelt thanks.

CONSTANCE ASTLEY.

FAMILY HISTORY AND CHILDHOOD.

SIR RICHARD VINCENT SUTTON, sixth Baronet, of Norwood Park, county Nottingham, & Benham Valence, Berkshire, born on 26th April, 1891, was the only child of Sir Richard Sutton, the fifth Baronet, by his marriage with Constance, daughter of Sir Vincent Corbet, third Baronet, of Moreton Corbet and Acton Reynold, Shropshire. On both sides he came of the old race of feudal landowners who, under the Sovereign, have ruled and served their country well for many generations. The tradition they created and passed on through the centuries, of personal honour, of disinterested service, of just and generous use of power, wealth, authority—at once the epitome and the outcome of their Christian faith, has been the life-force that made England great, and found its apotheosis in the war. Never was there a time when all that *noblesse oblige* implies involved more sacrifice; never were its obligations more cheerfully accepted and loyally fulfilled than in these tragic years, by the finest element in the country's youth. And among that gallant company Sir Richard Sutton took his natural place, maintaining with the best the standards of personal courage and chivalry for which men look to their leaders, the unselfish devotion that inspires by example, the kindness and courtesy that turns every relation into friendship, until the last, when his life was laid down in the military hospital at Wimereux on 29th November, 1918.

¶ The Sutton Family was established in the Northern Midlands from the time of the Norman Conquest, the main line being the Suttons of Averham who united the names of Sutton and Lexington. Among the distinguished members of this house were Oliver de Sutton, Bishop of Lincoln in the latter part of the thirteenth century, who completed the cathedral and enriched the see; Sir Richard Sutton of Henry VII's reign, who gave half the endowment of Brasenose College, Oxford, and his kinsman Thomas, who

founded Charterhouse monastery and school; Sir Robert Sutton, later Lord Lexington, who fought for King Charles in the Civil War, and his son and nephew, who were famous diplomatists in the reigns of William and Mary and Queen Anne. The Lexington branch died out in the second generation, but the male line of Suttons of Averham continued, and the baronetcy was created in 1772. The famous sportsman of the early part of the nineteenth century, Sir Richard Sutton, was the second Baronet. It was said of him that he hunted eight days a week at his own expense, for he maintained the Quorn Hunt which met every day but Sunday, and a smaller pack of hounds which hunted two days a week. The tradition of sport was carried on by his son, Sir Richard Sutton, fourth Baronet, who bred the Derby winner of 1866, "Lord Lyon," winner also of the St. Leger and the Two Thousand Guineas Stakes.

¶Sir Richard Sutton, fifth Baronet, while inheriting to the full the family love of sport, was cast in a finer mould than those typical sportsmen, his immediate predecessors, and those who knew him best recognised later in his son many of his own characteristics: his thoughtful kindness and great generosity, his frank charm among intimates that contrasted with his indifference to general society. He was one of the finest yachtsmen of his day, and competed with his 80-ton cutter, "Genesta," for the America Cup in 1885. An incident of this race, in which Sir Richard could have claimed the prize, by reason of a foul on the part of the American competitor, but declined his right and sailed the match again, brought him warm popularity on both sides of the Atlantic, and the "Genesta's" later triumphs in international sailing matches, as well as in the Jubilee yacht race of 1887, were long remembered.

¶In the spring of 1888 Sir Richard Sutton married Constance Corbet. The Corbets of Moreton Corbet trace unbroken male descent from the Norman knight, Hugo le Corbet, who came to England with the Conqueror, and further back to Viking ancestors, from whose cognisance, the Raven, they took their name and coat of arms. Their history is too long to tell, but throughout the centuries, through much adventure and romance, they seem to have justified the description given of their ancestors by an old French chronicler: "La vaillance, la gentilesse et la courtoisie est tellement ne avec ces gentilshommes normands, que c'est comme un prodige d'en voir un mal gracieux ou peu civile."

¶Sir Vincent Corbet, Lady Sutton's father, had an especially charming personality—it was said of him, as later of his son, Sir Walter Corbet, that he never had an enemy in the world. Sir Vincent had much in common with his son-in-law and the three years that followed his daughter's marriage were full of happiness for them all. Then, in February, 1891, Sir Richard Sutton died of sudden brief illness, in the following April his son was born, and then, a few weeks later, Sir Vincent Corbet died.

¶In the overwhelming sorrow of her double loss the child brought a comfort and hope to his mother that nothing else could give, and from his earliest consciousness began that heart-whole devotion between mother and son, rare in its depth of sympathy and comprehension, that was the ruling influence of Dick Sutton's life. In December, 1891, Lady Sutton left Combermere Abbey, which her husband had taken for the sake of hunting, and made a temporary home at Chequers Court, Bucks, which she rented from her old friend Mrs. Frankland-Russell-Astley for the next eight years. Here Dick's early childhood was spent among many joys. A charming portrait painted of him at five years old shows him a handsome little fellow, his whole figure instinct with vitality as he stands with one sturdy hand grasping his grandfather's sword, and on his face the sunny expression that was always so characteristic. He learned to ride easily, very young, as might be expected; when a little over seven he writes to his mother:

My pony's got a very bad cold, so I can't ride it. I hope it will get well before the hunting. I am going to ride the little ponies, but I am afraid the saddle won't fit.

¶Reading presented more difficulty than riding, but this appears, from a letter written the same summer, to have been overcome on the strength of a tempting inducement:

My darling Mummie.—I can read and will you please give me my dog.

Your loving little Dickie.

¶His mother was in the habit of reading aloud to him a great deal, and this was an unfailing delight to both, for Dick's interest and enthusiasm over stories was intense; he would jump about the room in his excitement as the climax of adventure approached, applaud the hero and denounce the villain, who to him were real friend and foe, and the favourite books had to be read over and over again, till he knew them by heart. Only tragedy was barred, he was too ten-

From an oil painting by Charles Alexander.

der-hearted to endure that a story should end sadly. His mother was obliged to write a final chapter of her own to "Masterman Ready," in which that gallant mariner was rescued to live happily ever after, and there was real distress on a day when (the book in other hands) the account of Masterman Ready's death in the fight with the savages was read to him by mistake. With his keen *joie de vivre* went inevitably a passionate temper, and as a child his rage was hot and frequent, but never lasted. When the storm subsided he was eager to kiss and be forgiven, and in childish quarrels was always the first to make friends again. He learned self-control, however, earlier and more thoroughly than most, and in after years his character gained strength, as such natures do, from the power of keeping his temper.

¶ In 1895 Lady Sutton married again. Her second husband, Hubert Delaval Astley, was a younger son of Colonel Francis Astley by his marriage with Rosalind Frankland Russell, heiress of Chequers, and nephew of Jacob Astley, sixteenth Lord Hastings, in whose favour the barony was called out of abeyance in 1841. The warm mutual affection that subsisted between Dick and his stepfather runs through many letters addressed to "Padre," or "Father," and, later, "Pam"—Dick's own name for Mr. Astley.

¶ In the following year the younger brother, Philip Astley, whom Dick so dearly loved, was born. Two years later, Dick, then between seven and eight years old, developed a tendency to bronchitis, and it was advised that he should winter in a warm climate. He was accordingly taken to Egypt soon after Christmas by his mother and stepfather, with a small party of near relations—Dick's uncle by marriage, Sir William Levinge, and Lady Corbet ("Auntie Nee," whose name recurs so often in Dick's diary and letters), his mother's sister-in-law. This journey to Egypt, his first voyage abroad, was necessarily so full of new experience that Dick's mother suggested he should keep a diary of it, and the child entered into the idea with his usual zest. Accustomed as he was to listen to books read aloud, Dick, who was quick in observation and memory, had developed a faculty for expression that outran his capacity to write. So he dictated his impressions from day to day to his mother, who wrote them down without comment or correction, and their record is curiously vivid of the pictures imprinted on the child's mind. And though he never visited Egypt again, he never forgot the places he had seen there, nor the people with whom he came in contact.

¶Among those who knew him in those early days were two who remained his lifelong friends, the hospital Sister, who accompanied the party to Egypt, and Dick's governess, Miss Tiddeman, often referred to in his letters as "Tibbie." The former, in writing twenty-one years later of Dick, says: "He crept into my heart as no child has ever done before or since . . . he had an affectionate, loyal little heart. I never knew him tell an untruth or do a mean action."

¶Dick's generosity was always lavish, and he was taught from the first to give himself personal trouble, and to pay for his presents out of his own pocket-money, which he was not allowed to exceed unless under special circumstances. So he learned to make scarves and bed-socks for the poor of the village, and would carry them round himself to the old people on Christmas Eve. A letter on the subject of a gift he wished to make, written in the summer of 1899, is very characteristic, both of his nature and training.

My darling Mummie.—Please will you lend me 7 shillings if I pay you back when I have a nuff. There is a lovely sett of gardening tools which Tibbie likes and which I want to give her. She does not like the idear at all and says it is rong that I should spend the munny on her. Please order her to give me the munny. Please do. Your loving Dick.

¶Dick's childish letters, written unaided whenever he was away from his mother, are full of happy stories of the sailing of a toy "Genesta," of mushroom teas, and the intimate history of his step-father's birds and other pets. One, written in the spring of 1900, seems to hold the shadow of a forecast:

My darling Mummie.—I do miss you so very much. Isn't it jolly about Mafeking being relieved. Mademoiselle came this morning with a bunch of red white and blue paper streamers tied to the handle bar of her bysickle to show Tibbie how English she was. I have been drawing some more war plans for when I am a general. Your loving Dick.

¶The time had now come when it was felt that Dick should live at Benham Valence and form associations with his own place and its people. Chequers Court was given up, and after wintering at Bournemouth, where Dick's sister, Ruth Astley, was born in March, 1900, the family moved to Benham Valence, that was henceforward home. Dick loved it dearly—the old Georgian house and its beautiful gardens, the woods where later he learned to shoot, the lake and stream where he fished and boated to his heart's content. He had an inherited love, too, for living things, his horses and dogs, and by his wish, while he was still a boy, a few fruit trees were left

uncovered when the rest were netted every year, in order to keep wild singing birds about the place. It is small wonder that when, at ten years old, he went to his first school, he was less eager for companionship, more homesick in the beginning, than other boys of his age. He was sent to Ludgrove, the preparatory school of which Mr. Arthur Dunn was then headmaster, and where an elder cousin of Dick's, Vincent Corbet, had entered a year or so before.

SCHOOL DAYS.
LUDGROVE 1901-1904. ETON 1904-1909.

FTER the first plunge of leaving home was over—and not until it was over would he admit himself homesick—Dick's life at school was happy as it was bound to be for one of his cheerful, good-humoured temperament and ready faculty of making friends. He could hold his own on occasion, as may be gathered from his letters, and possessed, even as a child, a certain clearness of judgment that served to balance his large-hearted generosity and spared him in after years those disillusions that too often embitter life. To his old friends he was most faithful, as they to him, and those he made at Ludgrove and at Eton remained his intimates to the end. Their names occur often in his letters—Vere Boscawen, known as "Bunny," and his brother, sons of Lord Falmouth, of whom the former, who served in the Coldstream Special Reserve, was killed in the first winter of the war; Geoffrey Barclay and Reggie Hargreaves, who were in the boats together with Dick at Eton, and both joined the Rifle Brigade, the one being killed, and the other terribly wounded; "Bob" Fowler, captain of the Eton Eleven, and later of the 17th Lancers, and Dick's own cousins, "Vin" (Vincent Corbet), who died as a boy at Eton in 1903, and "Jim," afterwards Sir Roland James Corbet, Coldstream Guards, killed near Givenchy in April, 1915. In class and games Dick held a fair average place; it was in his nature to learn from men rather than books, to play from a sense of sport rather than from a passion for games. Though later at Eton he distinguished himself at football, he loved fishing, boating and hunting best of all amusements.

From a photograph by F. & R. Speaight.

His letters home tell their own story best:

Ludgrove, New Barnet, 3rd May, 1901.

My darling old Mummie.—I am not going to be examined till tomorrow morning. I like Mr. Done very much. Give Father lots of hugs from me.

Your loving boy, Dick.

My darling Father.—I hope your camerer is a success, and your taking lots of pictures with it. I expect you are having a lovely time at Tresco there is no room for more. Your loving boy, Dick.

5th May, 1901.

My darling Father.—I hope you are having a good time at Tresco. I was so miserable the first Day hear, but I am getting on better now. One boy came and hit all the new boys. When it came to my turn I took him by the color and shook him (he did not hurt mutch) he then went away muttering that he would give me a good licking, but I have not seen him since. There was one horid boy called H. who was always laughing at me because I did not know the rules and ways of the school, but I am thankfull to say he left for good and all to-day. Give Mummie my love and lots of kisses from me, and tell her that I will write to her next. Your loving boy, Dick.

10th May, 1901.

My darling old Mummie.—Thank you so *so* much for your letters. I hope you will write me long ones. That souns very greedy because you do write me long ones, but I want longer still. I would like to have run after that old turky cock you spoke about in your last letter. I hurd from Moris today, saying that he hoped I liked school and severel other things I can't remember what. I wrote to Tibbie today. You said before I came hear that you hoped I should make a friend of the little Kenyon Slaney boy, well I don't, I think he is a little retch when I came out of the sickroom for the first time to-day he said he hoped I should not come back to dormatry that night. He also threw a stone at Mr. Dunn's boy Johnie, who is about 7 and hit him on the leg. If I had seen him I should have given him a good shaking. One boy called stanley-forth* told me I was a fat sheep ready for markit, I told *him* that I hoped he would fetch a good price for he was certainly the bigest goos I have ever seen.

Your loving boy, Dick.

12th May, 1901.

My darling Mummie.—I am getting on quit all right now, though I am still homesick. Mr. Dunn wants me to send you this division list. It is for Latin only. I see my name is last, I do not [know] why. I hope to get out of this division at the end of the term. Mr. Hansel the master in this form has got a collection of book plates, and wants me to give him one of mine, so pleas send me one for him when you get back to Benham. I am going to end off nou for I want to write to Father. Your loving boy, Dick.

P.S. I can not find any adressed enverlops in my case, so adres it myself (coppied from post card).

* Staniforth.

16th May, 1901.

My dear old Mum.—I am getting on all right now, what ever the old school list ses I am not at the bottom of this form there are six below me and two above me. Your loving boy, Dick.

16th May, 1901.

My darling Tibbie.—I am so sorry I have not riten to you before, but I have very little time except on Sundays. I have not been examined, and am not going to be. I have been put in the pig-sty (nearly all the new boys are put their) there are two boys above me and six below me. I am working hard now to try and get the prise. I have to do my history again, in the fifth they are only doing William and Mary. Like an ass I have gone and lost that enverlope you sent me, but I hope to find it for the next letter. I went on drill a day or two ago for inking the desk, and found it very irksom. How is your mother, quit well I hope. Your loving Dick.

P.S. I think the proses of licking into shape has begun. I will give an instance next time.

19th May, 1901.

My darling Mummie.—I am going to tell you some of my nicnames. First seeds, 2, mutton (which Mr. Dunn himself calls me) 3, soot, which I think *most* stped. There are two little boys hear which are no bigger than Philip called Walker major and Walker minor. It was a mistake about H. I am going to tell you how it came about. His home is about 5 minits walk from hear, so he gose home every Sunday. So when I saw his place empty at table, I asked another boy were he was gone, and the boy said gone home, so I said for good and he said yes (the fiber), so when I saw him in the class room next day I was rather astonished. I do not writ any post cards because I do not like the post-man coging what I write. You were speaking about shells. Please I should like some very much. Your loving boy, Dick.

25th May, 1901.

My darling Mummie.—I have got some thing to tell you. Well I was standing near H. when Kenyon Slaney came up and said that he had got Sargint to put some nales in the bottom of his boots, to prevent him sliping and ask me wether I had got any in mine, I said that I had not, then H. chimed in "Why don't you have some nails in your filthy old" (they were bran new) "boots," I replied "they are not half as filthy as yours," this made him woolly and he bashed me on the tow with his bat. This made me very bally and I went for him, throwing my arms round his neck intending to nock him down, when to my great surprise he fasend his teeth in my cheeck. The very next day he hit a boy in the eye, for this he got spanked (in the proper place) with a cain.

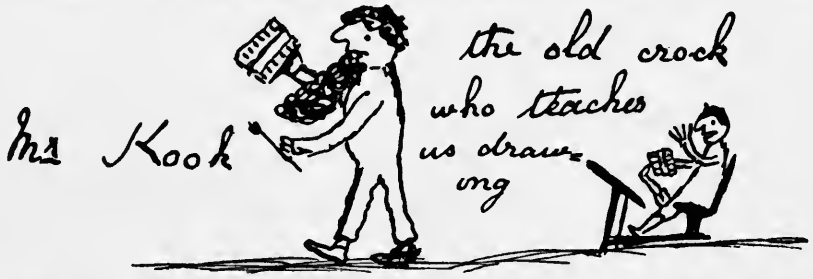
Much love from Dick.

June, 1901.

My darling Youdels*.—Are your Guine pigs quite well. I have 1 dril and two detentions since Mummie came down to see me. We play cricket every day. The melon and strawberys that Mummie sent me, there was a rush for the mellon,

*A nursery nickname for Philip, dropped later for "Pip" or "Squeaky," "Squax" and "Pippin."

and everyone cried out "give me some, give me some." Mr. Dunn cut it into about 20 pices. We have got a new monitor to my dorm named Berbeck



(otherwise Rats) He dose not keep us in such good order as Boscie. We have fine fun, we throw slipers at each other and talk after the silence bell and we have lovely rags. Your loving Garkar.*

P.S. Thank Mummie very much for the hamper.

1st July, 1901.

My darling Mummie.—The exams begin today, I hope I shall do well by the by you forgot my braces please will you send them as it is rather awkward without them. Give my love to Tib, Pippin and Ruth.

There is 1st match to-day. Your loving boy, Dick.

9th July, 1901.

My darling old Tibbie.—How are the squigs (squirrels). There was an awful rumpus here a few days agow. A boy named Baley put a large pin in Mr. Blor's chair, (one of the masters) for him to sit on. (It might have killed him.) Luckily it was discovered. Baley got wipped. I shall be able to go into the V. form this term. When are you going back to Benham, I do so want to know. The masters here are splendid at crickit, one of them was captain of the Eton 11. I hope your mother and the jay are quite well. Your loving Dickie.

27th July, 1901.

My darling Mummie.—I have done well with my exams except Latin Grammar which was very bad. The eregula words go out of your head if you go without looking at them for 10 days. You might let me go to the match at Kenyon Slaney's oh *do do please* let me go it will only be for a week. Thanks for pens.

Dick.

My darling old Mum.—I am almost off my head with joy at the thoughts of coming home, Mr Smith wants me to tell you that I am coming by the ten-eight, gets to London 10.31. There is a very nice gentleman here Lefttennent nox, he has been in a boat that tries to catch the slave dows, I have been talking to him most of the afternoon and the rest I have been reading "She," I have not quite got into it yet. I am longing to see you all (and my steamer) there was a match here yesterday we made 51 and they made 59 very close.

Your loving boy, Dick.

*Philip's nickname for Dick.

¶The sum of his first term's experience was noted by Dick in the following rules drawn up in his pocket-book in the summer of 1901.

1. Always be as nice and obliging as you can to everyone.
2. Don't be sat on by anyone if you can help it as there is no one you need really mind.
3. Don't swagger about in Divs. 5. and 6. as last term, but keep to your own room, that of the third.
4. Always carry string.
5. Don't allow yourself to be maltreated by C. and Co.

There follow notes on intended holiday purchases, and measurements for "my knew Genesta."

¶The summer holidays at Benham were full of the delights of fishing for perch and boating on the lake, picnics and drives with the pair of small ponies. But when the time came to go back he settled contentedly into the round of school life, of which the Sunday letters of term time give a cheerful chronicle. He would write at length of anything that interested him, and, as always, when his subject absorbed him, his thoughts outran his pen and his spelling would become erratic in proportion to his enthusiasm.

¶During the autumn of 1901 his mother and stepfather went abroad, and Dick, with the nursery party, spent Christmas at Acton Reynold, with Sir Walter and Lady Corbet. The next few letters were written during the autumn and early part of the Christmas holidays.

Sunday, 29th Sept. 1901.

My darling Mummie.—I am in the sickroom I have been in the sickroom 3 days. I hope I shall be back to lessons on Tuesday. I have had a little brocil gatar. I have just got up that is why I am writing in ink. I will send you a division list as soon as they are puplished. Thanks for pictures of the Shamrock. Please tell Tibbie that I was writing to her when I got a cold. I have painted a picture of the shamrock for you.

I enclose a scrible I wrote on Friday, nurse would not give me an enverlope to put it in she said it wasn't worth it.

Your loving boy, Dick.

The enclosed sketch of the racing yacht "Shamrock" is a very creditable piece of drawing for a child of ten, and his subsequent letters, especially those to his little brother, are often interspersed with pen and ink illustrations that show distinct talent.

20th Oct. 1901.

My darling Mummie.—There was a second 11 football match yesterday and we wonn. What huge pairs [pears] those were you sent; I expect I shall have one of the cakes out to night. How is Bandy Gosy and the Bantums. There are some geas hear and they are fond of grass; so Slaney and Staniforth tied some grass to a string, and they devoud it and the gardiner had to pull it out.

From you loving Dick.

23rd Nov. 1901.

My darling Mummie.—I wish you many happy returns of the day. I am so sorry I have not a present to give you but I do not know were to get one from. I am so sorry I have not got one. I have just left this letter on one of the desks for a minite, and one boy read it allowed. So I smacked his head and he did it again. I am going to try and write you a nice long letter. But I can not thinck what to say. We had a lecture last night on lord Nelson with lovely slides of the Battles, it was fun. I am making a boat carpintring for Philip at Crismas, if I can get it done in time, but as there is only one day a week carpintring, I don't know weather I shall get it done in time. I have writen rather close so I must leave off soon. We are going to have slides on the Acats of the Appossels to night great fun. Your loving Dick.

Sunday Nov. 1901.

My darling Tibbie.—How are Pipin and Ruth? I am making a scrap-book for Ruth mostly funny pictures, I hope she will like it. Two of the boys in our Dormatry are very swagger, they could easily beat the rest of the dormetry (Vincent, Slaney and myself) so we are going to have a great battle against them to show that we are the strongest on the last day of the term.

Your loving Dick.

Acton Reynald, Shrewsbury, 26th Dec. 1901.

My darling Mummie.—Thank you so very much for the *lovely* knife you gave me, Uncle Reggie has given me a lovely box of soldiers old knights with armour. I am so so sorry that my report is so bad and I will try and get on better next term to please you. We whent by the bore pits this afternoon and we saw an old cow on the ice trying to get off and it kept slipping down and the ice cracked and it nearly fell in. Your loving boy, Dick.

Acton Reynald, Shrewsbury, 4th Jan. 1902.

My darling Mummie.—I went hunting yesterday with Uncle Walter the meet was about 9 miles from here so we had a long ride home after eating all Uncle Walter's sanwages so he had none. Of cause he went on till about six. It seems so funny to see a red coat.* Vincent and I got in about half past three.

*The Old Berks Hunt with which Dick was familiar wore yellow plush.

We had about 11 miles home. Jim did not come as they thought it would be too far for him. We went out hunting last Monday Uncle Walter ran right on to Combermere Park. We are going for a walk up Grincil soon. Pippin is writing to Father, but I do not think it will be done till next Xmas. I am looking forward to seeing Nurse in the few days at Benham before going back to school. Give my best love to Father. Your loving boy, Dick.

¶Soon after that Christmas, Dick had a bad attack of bronchitis that turned to congestion of the lungs, and was very ill. When he could be moved he was sent first to Bournemouth for convalescence, and then to join his mother and step-father in Tenerife. Here they stayed until late in the spring, making their headquarters at Guïmar among the hills in the interior of the island, from which they made expeditions to the more distant points of interest. Dick soon contrived to pick up enough of the local dialect to effect friendly intercourse with his muleteer and guide Lorenzo, who had a fund of thrilling stories of the strange volcanic islands, of adventures and legends. Whatever Dick may have lost in ordinary school routine through his liability to lung troubles in this and other winters, was perhaps more than counterbalanced by the education that travel affords, and by the companionship and influence of his mother and of his step-father, who himself a finished linguist, artist, and connoisseur of many forms of art, did much to form Dick's taste. During the next few years Mr. Astley and Lady Sutton were abroad a good deal, often staying in Northern Italy, where the children joined them from time to time. They rented the Villa Costanza at Paraggi, on the Italian Riviera, for some years, and eventually bought a property, the Villa dei Cipressi at Varenna. Dick, who had a love of beautiful scenery, became very fond of the Villa on the Lake of Como, and long afterwards, during the war, went there for rest during one of his spells of leave.

¶Many of his letters from school are addressed to his mother in Italy, in autumn or early spring—in summer he saw her so often that there was little to write of.

Sunday, 15th June, 1902.

My darling Mummie.—It has been raining such a lot here, Vin and I have got up a drawing compation, you pay a halfpeny entrance, the money goes towards the prise which is a shilling score book for cricket, 2nd a 2peny manuscript and a 1peny pencil, 3rd halfpeny book and 1peny pencil. 24 boys are going in for it. They are going to be judged this evening before the reading, you are allowed to do anything you like, a horse, a ship, a flag, a dog or anything.

Vin wants to get a boat, he is willing to give two pounds. We think a scooner would be the nisest. Can I stop on half an hour longer in London on my way home to help him choose it at the end of the term. We are going to have a very jolly time at the corination, we are not going to do lessons and we are going to fish in trent Lake, and we are going to tea at Trent house and let off fire works in the evening. The next day we are going to have a cricket [match] against another school there will be only 6 boys left of all divisions so shall have to borrow to make an 11. I miss all of you very much, but otherwise I am very happy. Your loving Dick.

Oct. 1902.

My darling Tibbie.—Thank you so much for your letter. You must be getting rather sad at the thorts of Mummie going away. Thank you so for the scrap-book, you have made it well, I can't make out how you made the cover and the name, it is very nice. I have not begun making it yet, I think I shall wait till the Xmas numbers come out. I am going to use the scraps you sent me to fill the room between the big pictures. You can certainly turn my frogs out, I hope they will find enough flys to keep them alive. . . . Nurse Broomfield wants my thiker vests to be sent because she thinks the weather is getting cold, I don't.

P.S. Please don't send my vests just yet.

26th Oct. 1902.

My darling Mummie.—Thank you so much for your letter I am sorry I have not written before, I began a letter last week but I never finished it always when I had time to finish it I was paying Ches. It is rather a pity for me there are only two boys in the last 3 divs. that can play, so there is not going to be a prise for lower school, so that shall have [to be] in the first divisions and so I am afraid that I can not get the prize, as there are some rather good chaps among them. There were some magic lanton slides here last night. One of the boys got it up. He wrote home for his lanton and some comic slides, it was to get money for the navy leage, it was 3d. frunt row, 2d. next row and peny last row, they got £1. 2. 1d. altogether for the Navy leage. The slides on the sheet are about as high as Pip is long. It was rather spoilt by one of the lenzes being broken by the heat of the lamp, which made the slides rather dim. It was a dear little lanton cost about 10 Sh. I had some of my pairs to day, they were good, but some of them were soft and gone. We shall soon be going down to the drawing room for reading. Miss Smith has just begun a new book, "How Harry got round the universe." Your loving boy, Dick.

Nov. 1902.

My darling Mummie.—Thank you so much for your letter, I am so sorry that I have not written to you before. But do not think that I have not written on Sundays because I have written 3 to Tibbie 1 to nurse, 2 to Mr. Hignett, once of cause when I sent him his present. There is not so very much longer I am glad to say. Auntie Nee came down here yesterday unexpectedly and stayed till ½ past four. She also brought down a Xmas number for Vin, he is very pleased at having one before me, she also brought down some dates for me and

some chocolate for Vin like we had on the Duco de Galaria. I, Kenyon Slaney and six others were invited to tea at Noresby by Miss Miclim, we had a lovely tea, and afterwards we played hide and seek all over the house in the bedrooms and everywere it is such a nice old house. When I was getting under Mr. Miclim's bed I upset a little basen and made a dreadful mess I expect Mr. Miclim put his feet in it as he got into bed. Your loving boy, Dick.

P.S. Please will you send the Xmas numbers as soon as possible, your toffy is prime, members of our dormetry has a piece every night to suck in bed.

Friday, 23rd Nov. 1902.

My darling Mummie.—I wish you many happy returns of the day. Tibbie sent me a lovely envilope stamped and adressed, but I left it in dormetry and I can not get it without a scug mark. So I think I must wast 2d. ½penny. Tibbie has sent me some scrumsius toffy but it is all gone now. We have it in our dormetry and we have one piece every night, to suck in bed, it is rather a good arrangement. I have played all my games of ches except one, I have wone 14, lost 2, 1 draw, I have got on a good deal with it since the begining of the term. I have one Xmas number, and one of the boys has given me a good many scraps, and Nurse Broomfield has given me a good many, some rather nice ones. It is History to night we have paper (examintion) last time we had it and I was 1st out of 16. Div. 4 in History are going to have some Magic lanton slides tonight. (I am III) Vin is going to wright for your birthday, give heaps of love to Father.

Your loving boy, Dick.

25th Nov. 1902.

My darling Tibbie.—Thank you so much for the toffy it was good. I sent Mummie's birthday letter yesterday (I mean the day before) How is your mother, I hope she is quite well. I expect Philip will enjoy himself at your home. He seems to be getting all the fun, he has seen your mother twice, and I have not even seen her once. I have very nearly finished my scrap book, Nurse broomfield gave me a good many scraps which have filled it up a good bit so I do not expect I shall want another Xmas number so do not send me one onless I say so . . . I am quite certain you, your mother sisters etc., will say how badely this is written but I can write better than this. Please send me some J. nibs. Give my love to your Mother and sisters, do not forget to ask the basket sister to make me a little basket. Your loving Dick.

Love from Vin.

1st Dec. 1902.

My darling Father.—Thank you *so* much for the cheque you sent me, I have put it aside for Christmas presents. I hope Nurse will like her dog kenil.* I do wish we could bring my magic lantern out to Italy. . . . . *Dec. 10th.* Dear Father I am so sorry this has not been posted before but for some days I could not get stamps, and then I have been in the sickroom for the last few days with a cold and nettle rash. *Please* forgive me for seeming to be ungrateful but I am not. Dick.

*This was one made by Dick himself.

28th January, 1903.

My darling Mother.—If you don't think it is to extravagant will you bye me a swan fountain pen at the Stores, for red ink, I do want one so badly, will you please subtract the price from my money which you are taking care of. I would also like you to get one for Father and pay for it out of my money but it must be a *great* surprise.

Please ask for "Swan fountain pen, with a long nib, medium pointed nib."

Your loving Dick.

Ludgrove, March, 1903.

My darling Mummie.—Thank you so much for your letter written in the train. Ishall be thinking of you at the Villa. I have left all my 2½d stamps downstairs, so I have to write with this envelope. Vin and I had our jam out yesterday for tea. I have toothache today, but it is only bad enough to be iritible. I have had a cold, I did not tell you, but I caught it on the journey, I felt it in my throat while I was in London, but I thought you might keep me back from school. That's why I wanted to get off on Thursday. On Friday I was as horse as a crow and Saturday afternoon Nurse Broomfield draged me to the sickroom. There was no school that night as there was a lecture (which I missed) I stopped in sickroom Sunday and came back to my lessons on Monday though I was not allowed out of doors that day and had my meals in sickroom. I am quite well now and have been doing the usal ruteen since Wenesday (My toothache is getting *worse*) Please give my love to all at the Villa and tell Pip I will write to him soon. My watch has come and goes very well. I joined the navy leage this morning it costs 5/- to belonge. Your loving Dick.

Here follows a sketch of himself with one cheek the size of an apple and written beneath "in a few days."

In another letter when he had been at home in her absence, he writes that he enjoyed it, "but Benham is never the same without you."

Nov. 1903.

My darling Father and Mummie.—Thank you so much for your letter. I enclose the usual train notices. I shall soon be seeing you, in 16 days. There was a lecture last night, on life in a pond, and instead of the Magic Lantern the man who gave it drew pictures of the things which he talked about on a blackboard in coloured chorks, it mostly consisted in beetles. There was one with very short hind legs. There was one grub which lives at the bottom of ponds, which breathes by its tale, which sticks up. If the water gets deeper it grows a longer tale, so that the tail always pokes out at the top of the water at the edges of the pond. There was one sort of beetle that flies about at night, and thinks that the moon shining on greenhouses is water, and shuts its wings and drops against the glass. Your loving Dick.

Sunday, 11th Dec. 1903.

My darling Mummie.—Only three days more before I shall see you, I suppose we shall do some Christmas shopping in London on Wednesday. I have made a list of the things I want to go to Italy, it is rather a long one, I am afraid you will scratch off some of the things, and on the other side Xmas presents. I shall add to the list for Italy when I find my things. I have learnt how to net this term but I have lost all my netting things. Best love to Tibbie.

Your loving Dick.

I wonder if I shall be able to take my majic lantern, I shall be so sorry not to try it these hollidays. Can my play box go this time to take my things. I enclose these orders for your interest, Div. III do exams with Div. IV.

(Enclosure to Philip.)

My darling Pip.—I hope your cold is alright now, and that you are able to enjoy yourself. Please tell Tibbie that some of the boys are going to have French holliday tasks, I *hope* I shall not be one of the unfortunates. It is nice to think that there are only two more days before I see you. I wonder if there will be any scating at Benham, now you have got some boots you will be able to do wonders. Your loving Gaka.

The Xmas holidays of 1903 were to have been spent at Paraggi, but Dick was laid up with a very bad cold, and unable to travel, so his mother returned to be with him at Benham, while the younger ones were with their father in Italy and Dick wrote to all of the party abroad in turn.

Dec. 1903.

My darling Tibbie.—Just a line to wish you a very happy Xmas, it is sad that we shall not be with you, but I hope for the New Year. I wonder if you like Greeta, it will be nice having her and driving her about. The Genesta looks very fine now, she has been painted, scraped and the cracks have been filled up with glue and red led. I much enjoy playing with my engines, which are both unpacked. Mummie was very pleased with her pen* but refuses ever to let me write with it as she says it spoils it. Nurse has gone to tea at the Vicarage.... I hope she won't follow the example of the young lady of Tottenham.

There was a young lady of Tottenham
Whose manners she'd entirely forgotten 'em
When at tea at the Vicar's
She kicked off her knickers,
Because she declared she felt hot in 'em.

Heaps of love, Your loving Dick.

28th Dec, 1903.

My dear Philip.—Thank you so much for the lovely pistol. I shot Nurse this morning and made her jump so. I longed to shoot the doctor on his borld head and then the dart would have stuck. I am much better today, and the

* The pen was Dick's own Christmas present to his mother, and therefore precious.

doctor actually said I could have some turkey, only as chicken had been ordered so I had it. All Mummie's dreatful stories of beef tea and mutton broth were not true. I expect you have been having a very happy time. Please give my best love to Father, Kate and Forbie. And if you can give it to Chelestina and Michele in Italian so much the better. Your loving Dick.

29th Dec. 1903.

My darling Pippin.—I do wish I was out in Italy with you. I do want to see you all so badly. I think the new Golliwogg sounds lovely I am so longing to see it. It seems to me that the Golliwogg book will go on till we have a whole bookcase full of Golliwogg books. I am going down into the Hall today, it will be nice going down. I wonder if you have been for any more drives with Greta . . .

P.S. I wish you a VERY happy New Year.

7th Jan. 1904.

My darling Pippin.—I think it is about time I wrote to you again, I expect you have been having great fun, I wonder if you have been out in a boat with Daddy yet. We have been very busy doing up the comforters which I have made, ready to be given away when we can do so. It will be nice when you do some too, we shall have such a lot to give. When I first began I used to grumble and think myself so ill treated to have to do it. I wonder if you will be the same, I hope not. I suppose you have been down to the beech this time. Heaps of love and hugs and kisses to you and Ruth from Dick.

¶In the three years at Ludgrove the transition stage from childhood to boyhood had passed so smoothly that the letters throughout show development rather than change of outlook and thought. Conservative as ever in his affections, it was almost as hard for him to uproot from his first school when the time came for him, in the spring of 1904, to go on to Eton, as it had been to leave home in the first instance. But regrets, though keen, were short-lived and happy associations proved lasting.

¶Mr. G. O. Smith, who had succeeded Mr. Dunn as headmaster at Ludgrove, writes on his part as follows:

Ludgrove, New Barnet, 4th Feb., 1904.

Dear Lady Sutton.—I can't tell you how sorry I was to get your letter of yesterday and to learn that Dick's time here is so soon to end. We shall all miss him very much: he is such a nice boy and just the sort to be of great value to a school. I have no wish to flatter you, but such boys as he and dear Vincent do more good than I fancy any of us are aware of. I will do what I can to get him ready for the Eton entrance exam., but the time left is short. . . . I think you had better have someone to go through some Eton Entrance Exam. papers during the last fortnight of the holidays. I will look out for a tutor, if you like, or possibly you know of someone who would go through the papers with him.

Yours very sincerely, G. O. Smith.

¶Dick himself writes on the same subject:

7th Feb. 1904.

My darling Mum.—I think it is your turn for a letter to-day. I expect you are glad to be out there[in Italy]again. Mr. Blore is going for a trip to Florence these holidays, he is going by the St. Gothard about the same time as we go, we may travel with him, I wish he could come and teach me in the holidays. I am very sory to be going to Eton at the end of this term. You might write and ask Mr. Blore later on in the term. If you can't get Mr. Blore you might write and ask Mr. Hignet, he was a master here at one time, I was very fond of him, do you remember I gave him a match-box? His adress is G. D. Hignet, Esq., Rottingdean School, Brighton. . . . I think it is nice to have someone one knows. He took me in classics when I was in Division V.

Best love to all, Your loving boy, Dick.

21st Feb. 1904.

My darling Mum.—Thank you so much for your letter. I *am* pleased that Mr. Blore is comming to coach me these hollidays. I am going to see Father Adderley on Wednesday. . . . I am afraid that I have been doing very badly in my Geography lately, but we are just going to do Italy now, so I hope to do better. Mr. Brown gave me a great joring on Friday because I only got one mark out of about 15, for some questions. I have been doing some Eton Entrance examinations with Mr. Blore. . . .

¶The Easter holidays, spent at Paraggi, were a delightful remembrance. There were long days on the shore, and walks and picnics on the hills in the delicious weather of an Italian spring. Mr. Blore wrote to Lady Sutton on his return to England. . ."I don't think I ever spent a happier month. We all miss Dick very much: but still he is the sort of boy with whom one has formed a real friendship, and his affection for Ludgrove and for all of us, is a great consolation for his loss."

¶Dick had passed into the third form at Eton, and his tutor writes of this:

. . . I am afraid he will be disappointed . . . I only hope he won't worry himself about it. It is the usual fate of those who leave here in the third division . . . he will certainly get out of 3rd form at the end of this term. . . .

¶Dick was disappointed, but far more for Mr. Blore's sake than for his own. His housemaster's wife, writing a fortnight after term had begun, says:

. . . I think Dick is feeling much more at home now; the liberty at Eton is rather bewildering to a little boy after having been accustomed to having all his time arranged for him—but of course it is part of the education. . . . He is a dear, friendly little fellow. . . .

¶In a later letter she adds to her first impression:

. . . The delightful part about Dick is that he is equal to any occasion, and always ready to throw himself into what is going on. . . . He tells me that he is never dull, and always finds his time full. . . .

¶Mr. White-Thomson's own opinion was given at the end of the summer half:

. . . Dick has made a good start at Eton. He was rather homesick, or perhaps Ludgrove-sick at first, and took some time to get into the ways of the place, but I think has been quite happy lately, and I feel sure he will get on. . . . He had, I thought, done rather below his proper form in the Entrance Examination. He has kept very well all through the half, and has given no trouble in any way. I always enjoy my visits to his room in the evening. He has a great charm of manner, and can talk away without the shyness that hampers so many boys of his age. . . .

¶Dick was within such easy reach of home at Eton that his letters of the next few years contain comparatively little record of his doings or ideas. But the reports of his tutors frequently note the excellence of style and matter in his written English work—"He has ideas and expresses them clearly"—"he is never afraid to say what he thinks"—and there is constant friendly mention of his cheerfulness and good humour, and his sense of fun. This last characteristic was unfailing—Dick was one of those rare persons who thoroughly enjoy a joke against himself, and his sense of humour, keen as it was, held no spark of malice. His laugh, infectious in its pure gaiety, would, all through his life, set others laughing too, even before they shared the cause of his amusement. "He is always delightful to deal with," wrote one of his tutors—"simple and eager."

¶Religion was an integral part of life to him, even as a boy. A book of short prayers, given to him when he was going to his first school, is pencilled by the child here and there—a petition for moral courage underlined, and on the fly-leaf two prayers added in his own round hand—the one for relatives in sorrow, and the other for help in doing his lessons. He was confirmed on Palm Sunday, 1904, in London, and from that time onwards acted as server at the early celebrations of the Eucharist on Sundays and festivals in the parish church of Stockcross, whenever he was at home. His faith was deep and sincere, but never fanatical, seldom spoken of, and shown, not on his lips but in his life.

Ludgrove, March, 1904.

My darling Mummie.—Thank you so much for your letters. Auntie Nee and Uncle Reg came down to see me yesterday; it was nice seeing her. I wonder what day you will be in England. I went to Eaton Place to see Father Adderley last Wednesday. I think it would be much better if I returned to Ludgrove on Sunday because I should miss a good deal of swat if I did not, which is rather important before exams. . . . . I am to see Father Adderley on Palm Sunday morning, as he wants me to make a confession, he asked me to tell you about it. I am rather afraid I shall have to tell him about when I told a story to Tibbie at Chequers you know. I shan't like that at all. . . ."

¶He always remembered the home birthdays, especially Philip's, and during the years at school he never failed to write to his brother, and from Eton, to spend the day with him if possible.

¶Here are some of the birthday letters:

Ludgrove, 9th June, 1902.

My darling old Philip.—I hope you had a very hapy birthday, I have been thinking about you all day. We had some cricket today for the first time and my bat did drive. There is a little boy here that is 4ft. 3in hight and 4 stone in weight. I wonder if you had a nice picknick to day. No one will now be able to call you 5 for you are *six*. Your loving brother, Gaka.
P.S. Just going to smack Carlton.

Eton, 8th June, 1904.

My darling Pippin.—Many happy returns of your birthday, I hope you will like the clock work boat. I am much looking forward to seeing you on Saturday. I thought it would be better to come on Saturday, because if I come on your birthday I could not leave Eton until 12 o'clock, but on Saturday I can get away at half past eight, as it is a whole holiday. I wonder what you are going to do to-morrow as birthday treat . . . .

9th June, 1905.

My darling Pippin.—To-day is your birthday, I do so wonder if you have got a lot of nice presents. This afternoon we are going to see the king of Spain drive by. I shall get you a little present to bring on Tuesday, but my proper present must wait till the holidays when I can choose it myself.

Much love from your loving Dick.

¶Several of Dick's schoolfellows at Ludgrove went on with him to Eton—the next letter was written during the summer holidays while staying with one of them (Kenyon-Slaney). Further letters date from Benham during long leave in the autumn half and the following March when, after a serious illness, he had returned to the care of "Tibbie," always his devoted nurse on these occasions.

Hatton Grange, Shifnal, 1st Aug. 1904.

My darling Mum.—I am much looking forward to seeing you on Tuesday. I had great fun on Saturday fishing. I caught 2 rainbow trout of over 1 lb. each

with my spinner. Bailey & Victor Paget who were fishing with a fly hooked a fish but they broke the line each time as it was rather old. We won the first match against Shrewsbury and the other was a draw.

Heaps of love from Dick.

P.S. The rainbow trout were such good eating.

Eton, 22nd Dec. 1904.

My darling Mum.—This is the last letter I shall write here for 5½ weeks... I am sure you will never guess what we have got as a holiday task. Kingsley's Heroes. I have bought a lovely edition of it with notes and a map in the beginning of it. I wonder what horrid little bird has been telling *untrue* tales about me. He is rather snubed, as I have passed in trials. I have not started the Heroes yet, because I am waiting to do it with you in the holidays. I have bought a 6d novel to read when all the books are packed up. It is called the Prisoner of Zenda. I wonder if it is good. I am going to write to Father for Xmas some time to day so this won't be the last letter. By the by, I suppose this will arrive on Xmas morning, if I post it this evening. Your loving Dick.

To H. D. A., who was then in Italy. Eton, 25th Feb. 1905.

My darling Father.—Thank you so much for the cheque you sent me, I have already thanked you through Mother, but that of course is not enough. I am ever so much better . . . the doctor says I shall be able to leave here on Friday or Saturday he thinks, so I am getting quite excited at the thoughts of going home, and I hope, after a time, out to you. I believe I am not coming back at all this half, which will be lovely . . . it will be nice being with you for such a nice long time as well as the Easter holidays . . . Heaps of love and hugs from

Your loving boy Dick.

Please thank Mother for her too letters which came this morning.

To Miss Tiddeman. Eton, 25th Feb. 1905.

My darling Tib.—The books and grapes have just arrived, and I am very pleased with them, I hope to get up to morrow. So that shows you how much better I am . . . . the doctor said he hoped I should be able to leave here some time next week. Mrs. White Thomson said she would write and ask you to come and see me, but I don't know that it will be worth it now from her point of view, of cause *I* should always like to see you. I have just written a very cramped and untidy letter to Nurse so if you want to know the details about my health you must ask her for them. In case you don't I will tell you my temperature keeps normal and just below. Give my love to Philip Ruth and your sister from me. I am so looking forward to seeing you all. Your loving Dick.

An undated letter to "Tibbie" may belong to this or the previous summer.

There was a huge swipping this morning, 3 chaps one after the other, for smoking in Cuckoo Weir (the bathing place) I am sorry to say I did not get a good vew. But one time I had a spiffing one. I saw the birch comming down on his sit-upon which got pink and then frightfully red. The Flea wirls the

birch round his head when he gets angry. You can hear the sound of it comming down a great way off. Of course he has a new birch for each boy. Afterwards the whole floor is covered with pieces of birch. Mother says I may have 1£ to by a new cricket bat with as I have bust mine. The frute arrived quite safely, could you send me some things for tea, as we have got nothing. Cold bacon, a round tongue and some butter would be the nicest. Your loving Dick.

Ruth's Birthday (5th March, 1905).

My darling Mummie.—Thank you so much for your letter. Ruth was very pleased with her presents, especially the dinner set. She also likes the witch very much. We all think the pictures are lovely. Ruth will have her tea set for tea today I expect. We came from Eton in a shut motor which was great fun. We took two hours. M. has done my life boat and engine beautifully, I am so pleased with them, my engine is before me on the table as I write. Tibbie's sister is going home tomorrow. I can't think of any news any more than Philip could yesterday and Tibbie would never let me stop yet. So I suppose I shall have to think of something more to say. Polly is up here in the schoolroom and talks all day. Ruth has 20 minutes reading and she can read a whole sentence if you chose the right words. It will be lovely seeing you and Father again. Will Philip and I be able to share a room. I do hope so, if so you would have a spare room. . . . Mr. White Thomson says this won't make any difference to my work as I should be moved up in trials. Ruth has had a good many presents, but none except from people in the house and you and Father and Forbie. She is *very* pleased with the Buffet, and I expect will come in soon and pretend to sell us something.

Heaps of love to you and Father from your loving boy, Dick.

¶Early in April Dick went out to Italy with Philip, to spend the Easter holidays with their parents, and returned to Eton for the summer half, from which the next three letters date.

Eton, 24th May, 1905.

My darling Mum.—I am just writing a line to impress on you the importance of writing for your rooms to the White Hart. I also wish to know whether you will be back by the 1st of June, and if not, please will you write a note to My Tutor, to say I may go for short leave to Tib. I shall probably want to bring Wynne Finch with me, he is very nice and was at Ludgrove, unless of course you have any objection. You might as well mention that in your note. I do hope you will be back. If you are not back for 14 days from when your Sunday letter came you would not be back for the 3rd June either. In your note also you might invite Tuty to come fishing during the May fly, if there is any, he would be so pleased, he can generaly get away on Thursdays or Saturdays, and of course whole holidays. I have settled to take long leave not at the Eton and Harrow, but on St. John the Baptist's day, as you can get away early that morning (Sat.) and stay till 11 o'clock on Monday, while a Lords you only score Sunday and none of Saturday for your leave, as Lord's leave lasts till 10 o'clock Monday night. . . . Don't forget to write to Tuty, or for the room.

¶Dick's injunctions were not forgotten; his mother returned from Italy in time to spend the fourth of June at Eton, and "Tuty" came over to fish at Benham. . . .

10th June, 1905.

My darling Mummie.—This is your Sunday letter which I am sure you will be looking out for when Monday comes, being written on Saturday after post. Is it not splendid to think that the day after you get this I shall be with you for short leave, Finch is coming as I promised him and I don't like to dissapoint him. We have got a whole holiday by request of the king of Spain, and it has been settled for the first day of the Winchester match, Friday June 22nd. I am hoping that perhaps we may be able to have Friday too as long leave, the only thing is we should miss that one hour's early school on Saturday which would not be possible I am afraid. But I still hope. I went up to see Johnstone today and he is nearly allright. He is to leave the home on Friday. I also picked up an opal in the garden, which the lady above had thrown out of the window, because she said it was the unluckyness of the opal that had made her ill, she would not give it to any of the nurses because she said it was so unlucky. Johnstone saw it shining in the grass outside, so I went and at last found it, we pulled out the stone, and I kept it, Johnstone had the setting. Will you please put it in my collection, which is in that old box which Tib gave you in your sitting room. I shall not write to Tib or Auntie Nee this week as I shall be seeing them so soon. They can read all there is to say in this. . . . I am bringing Philip a small present on Tuesday. But my proper present can wait till the holidays. Your loving boy, Dick.

Eton, Sunday 2nd July, 1905.

My darling Mummie.—I suppose this is the last letter this half that I shall adress to Benham I do so hope Sandy will not see you go, as he would be so unhappy. I wonder how the roses will do at the National Rose Show. I bathed this morning before breakfast which was lovely, the water was so warm. Cuckoo Weir shuts at 8 o'clock in the morning so you have to go early. . . . I was sorry to see you go out of the station on Thursday, it seemed to be years before I should see you. . . .

¶Mr. White-Thomson gave up his house at Eton at the end of that summer half, where he was succeeded by Mr. Wells. The former wrote, on leaving, to Dick's mother:

Dear Lady Sutton.—I have been really pleased with Dick's work this half and feel that he has made real progress. He has passed easily into Remove and some of his marks are most creditable, particularly his Latin prose, which is rather a weak point as a rule. It has been a great wrench on us parting with our boys, and we are both very fond of Dick. He has a very charming manner and has great refinement and power of sympathy. I feel too that he has really been trying to work better and that his efforts have this time been rewarded. It has been a pleasure to teach him, and to have him in the house.

I am, yours sincerely, R. White-Thomson.

¶ The summer holidays, of which the next two letters relate, were spent partly on the coast of Normandy, and partly at Benham.

Brise de Mer [Puys], 3rd Aug. 1905.

My darling Mum.—I arrived yesterday at 3.30. and found Father on the pier. The boat was quite crammed, there was hardly a square inch not covered by someone. Ruth was *very* pleased to see me, and so of course was Father. This afternoon we went for a drive, and were to have gone to see the castle (d'Arques) only the rain came and stopped us. . . . Ruth and I went paddling this evening on the sand and had great fun. . . . How is Sandy, I suppose he was on the doorstep to meet you. I think "Darly Darly" was very pleased to see me she gave several kisses—"Poor Lamb." Heaps of love to Tib and Aunt Leila, G.N. Miss Pat, Miss Trew and Nuttie. . .

Benham, 10th Sept. 1905.

My darling Mum.—I miss you so very much. I had great fun, coming back in the train, the day I came to London, I suppose you know it is the Birmingham express, which slips a Reading [coach] and we change there. Well that nice ticket collector told the guard of the Reading slip, to ask me if I would like to go in the van, and slip the carriage; all the sleep went away in a second. The guard told me exactly what to do, and he let me slip the carriage, it *was* fun. We are going to a mushroom tea with the Trews. I went cub-hunting yesterday, and had rather good fun. Mrs. Smith came to lunch, but as it rained all the afternoon I could not go for a drive in the motor . . .

Eton, 14th Oct. 1905.

My darling Mum.—Here at last is your rightful letter being written. I explained on my postcard some of the reasons which had prevented me from writing before; last Friday afternoon when I hoped to write I found that we were playing a lower boy match which I could not get out of. The hamper arrived quite safely containing two uncooked and two cooked pheasants. I gave Dempster one cooked and one uncooked, I wish they had all been uncooked, it is much better, because we can have them hot from Rowlands with bread sauce. We were beaten in one lower boy match by Broadbent's. I am Lyon's fag and have very little to do in consequence as there are four others. So I only have to make toast every fourth day, and only one piece then. The work is very hard I think, and it makes a lot of difference not having a tutor like Mr. W. T. who used to teach you your translation so beautifully. I have already had 3 slips and a yellow from Mr. McDoul for not knowing my translation, I have had no letter from Squeeks; he seems to be serving me out rather in the same way as I am you. Did I tell you that the lecture last week was on the protection of birds; the lecturer was an old Etonian, who had never lectured before; and he did not know much about what he was saying. He read all his lecture from notes he had made before, and somehow the man at the lantern muddled the slides, and they came in the wrong order, and he went on reading about one bird, saying, "Now this bird is very hansom he is a European crane" when under the picture on the bottom was written in large letters "The Great Awk" . . . and so

when the poor man turned round to point out the chief features of the crane, he found the great awk sitting on its eggs in its place; he was very nervous all through the lecture, and did not seem to know much about the birds. Father would have done it much better. The slides were very good however. Last Friday foughtnight we had a lecture on game birds and their enemies, which father would have loved; it was very good and most interesting. It was all about the real enemies of game birds and was very graphic, on the inocent creatures who are accused falsley of hurting the game. It mentioned the owl very petticularly saying how much good they do. There were also some awfully good pictures of Rats taking Pheasant's eggs the real enemy of the game as the lecturer called them. Don't forget to write at once to Mr. Wells about my leave. Your most loving boy, Dick.

Please forgive me about not having written to you, better late than ever.

¶Every winter had brought some return of bronchial trouble, and towards Xmas, 1905, the doctors advised that Dick should spend the next two or three months in the Swiss mountains. Caux, above Territet, on the Lake of Geneva, was the place chosen, and Dick went there with his stepfather in January, 1906, his mother joining them soon afterwards. Apart from the one delicacy he was very strong and well and thoroughly enjoyed skating and snow-sports, especially toboganning, and in the pure, keen air of the mountains shook off much of his susceptibility to cold. When the snow melted they wandered on by slow stages through Switzerland to Paris, and so home again, Dick returning to Eton after Easter. His old room that he was so pleased to keep was on the second floor of one of the rambling old houses facing the Chapel, overlooking Keats Lane. Dick certainly gained very much in health about this time, massage and breathing exercises, for which he was in the hands of "Dempster," so often mentioned in his letters, completing the cure begun at Caux. Dempster was soon added to the list of Dick's personal friends, and his recollections throw a light on a side of Dick's character that passed unnoticed among masters and schoolfellows. "He always wanted to know how people lived in social grades other than his own, what their chances in life were, what they thought about things—not from idle curiosity, but from a real desire to understand another point of view, with the thought always deep in his mind that within a few years he would become responsible for the welfare of many whose mode of life was necessarily outside his own experience." Dick was ready to learn from any who could teach him on the human side of things, and would

talk frankly to those who brought him new ideas, though he was very reticent in general of his own. "He wanted to understand," said Dempster, "he meant to use what he learnt by and by." This was a real bond of friendship, and there was the lighter side, too. A gramophone, tabooed at Mr. Wells' house, was kept at Dempster's, Dick's special friends met there to play it, and the masseur was a kindly and valued adviser on athletics to Dick, among so many other Eton boys. In Dempster's opinion Dick would have been among the best oars at Eton if he had remained for the summer half of 1909.

¶ The following letters written from Eton are taken here and there from many that relate of those days:

Eton, 6th May, 1906.

My darling Mummie.—I arrived here quite safely last night, and was the first in the house by about 2 hours. I have got my old room, which looks just the same as ever. Rody has a lovely room I am quite jealous of him now. His old room has been joined to the one next door him, and has made a lovely room with two windows, it is now about the size of Philip's room. How are Philip and Ruth? There is no work today at all. Isn't it dreadful that we forgot the holiday task. It is Ivanhoe. I hope I may manage to get 20 out of 100 for it as I have read it before. It is 600 pages so it is no good my trying to get through it before tomorrow at four o'clock. But someone has lent me his book in which he has underlined what he thinks are the likely passages. Five lower boys were out of trials by measels and flu last half. . . .

To H.D.A., who was then in Sweden:

Eton, 1st July, 1906.

My darling Father.—Thank you so much for your letter and postcards, and also for sending me the thing to keep my frogs in. It has not arrived yet, but I expect it will soon. I have been catching a good many bluebottles for them during the last few days. Everyone has bought frogs now as they liked seeing my frogs eat the bluebottles. It is rather a pity as flies are wanted by everyone. I wonder if you liked Särö. I suppose you are there by now. It must be nice travelling in a country you have never seen before. I *am* excited at the thought of going to Henley. Someone in the junior match yesterday, in trying to catch a catch, walked backwards into Jordan; but however he caught it. The unfortunate creature sank up to his waist in the mud at the bottom of Jordan. I have been doing some more sketches, or trying to, with Sidney Evans; it is rather fun. . . . I am afraid I wrote my last letter to Paraggi, so you will not get it for months. I am thinking of you arriving at Särö, and wondering what sort of rooms you will have.

Please give my love to Auntie Nee and loads of love and kisses to Mummie and yourself. Your very loving boy, Dick.

Eton, 3rd Feb. 1907.

. . . I went out with the beagles last Thursday but we did not have much of a day, and did not kill. . . . Thank you very much for the Iliad I find it very useful. It is not quite literal enough to be called a crib, but helps me a good deal to get the sense. . . .

Sunday, 26th May, 1907.

My darling Mum.—Thank you so much for your letter, I am so looking forward to seeing you on the 4th June, in about 10 days time. I expect you found it very hot travelling yesterday, it was here, but to-day it is raining. I shall think of you catching *many* trout tomorrow, perhaps some of those we caught while netting the Pound stream. I am longing to see my Rainbow trout, I wonder if they have grown at all; you will tell me in your next letter how they are. M'Tutors have just won the House shooting cup, it looks very nice on the dining table, it was mostly won by Hargreaves, who is a very good shot and will probably get in the shooting eight. I did not get a requet court last week, but I am certain to this week. I hope you will not be very bored with this very dull letter. Heaps of love to you and Father. Your loving boy, Dick.

Eton, 28th Sept. 1907.

My darling Mum.—I have been invited to go over to Shottesbrook some time next week, so will you please write me a letter coppying this one which I am sending, I have to show M'Tutor a letter saying you wish me to go, or else I shan't be able to get leave off 2.15 absence. If he knew that I was going in a motor, he might take it into his head not to let me go, in case I should go to London or somewhere, so in your letter say this:

> "My dear Dick.—I believe Gladys will want to take you out to lunch with her one day next week. If she does I should like you to go."

That is all you need to say about that. It is quite unnecessary to say where you have lunch, and how you get there. Please write at once, as I believe Thursday will be the day. I wonder if you enjoyed the races, and found the box comfortable and convenient. I see it says in the paper it was a very good meeting. I have got to go to Mr. Evans now for drawing so I must leave off. Ever so much love to you and Pam, also to Tib and Ruth. Your loving Dick.

I suppose you will be off on Monday, I bathed yesterday, the water was lovely.

Eton, 21st Oct. 1907.

My darling Mum.—Thank you so much for your letter. It poured with rain last Friday, which quite spoilt our field day, as we were wet to the skin by lunch time. We are going for another field day against Wellington on Thursday, but it is going to be only a half day starting from here at 12.30 instead of 9.30. Leave is next Saturday 26th Oct. you have not said anything about it in your letter, whether I am going this half or next. If I do go this half, I shall have to show M'Tutor a letter from you to say so. I play football most days, but it has been too hot to play with much vigour. We had a concert here last night, there was one woman who sang quite beautifully. I don't know what

her name was. There were also some people who played the violin beautifully. We [volunteers] are going to have a new uniform, to be worn for the first time when the Kaiser comes. . . . Your very loving Dick.

¶His mother wrote back immediately to choose the long leave for the following week, and travelled home from Italy in order to spend it with him at Benham, but unfortunately it was stopped, as explained in the next letter, though Dick's philosophy was equal to the occasion:

My darling Mum.—Thank you so much for your letter, I am sorry my telegram was too late to save you the trouble of coming back, but I daresay it was almost worth it to get some hunting. I am dreadfully disappointed at not being able to come for leave, but I shall get my leave alright next half. M'Tutor found a crib in my room, it was rather bad luck, as I had only used it two or three times. There are only two chaps in the house who don't use cribs, but I was unlucky enough to be nabbed, while the other 34 weren't. I hoped I should have been swished, which doesn't hurt a bit. If I had been, I should have got my leave alright, as it was I was put on a white ticket. Anyone on a white ticket is not allowed any leave of any kind during the fortnight he is on it. If I had been on ten days earlier, it would not have mattered as regards leave, as I have not wanted any since the day I went to Shottesbrook. I am much looking forward to seeing you this week. I shall not be able to get leave of absence, but I hope M'Tutor will give me leave to go out to lunch, as that is not a school thing. Is the opening meet tomorrow? I had hoped to be there for it. But when leave next half comes, I daresay I shall be delighted that I could not go this. Ever so much love, Dick.

¶Lady Sutton, after a short stay at home during which she had some hunting, went back to Italy, taking with her the old vicar of Stockcross, who had been ill and needed change, all returning together for the Xmas holidays.

Tuesday, 17th Nov. 1907.

My darling Mum.—Fancy the dear old Gent actually being with you and Pam at Varenna. I expect it will do him an enormous amount of good.... The Kaiser was an hour and a half late yesterday and we had two hours to wait, I think he ought to give us an extra month at least for that. When he did arrive it was about dark. It came on rather foggy in the afternoon, having been nice and bright in the morning, which was a great pity. (*Friday*) This letter is somewhat belated isn't it. We had an excellent field yesterday although my company only had 20 min's action, but in that time I fired 40 rounds.... There is a lecture on trees tomorrow, to which I hope to go, *no* subject could please me more. The Confirmation is next Saturday. I suppose we shall have Dan Leno to preach in chapel next Sunday, or else Funny "Crumbs." I am afraid I shall not find much to say in my letter to Pam on Sunday, owing to

this letter bagging the news of 2 weeks. I must stop now as I have an extra work to do. Ever so much love to you and Pam and give the old gentleman my love.

Your loving Dick.

26th Jan. 1908.

My darling Mum.—I wonder how the entertainment went off on Friday, I wish I could have been there; I hope the fog did not spoil the attendance. I am up to Heygate, he is quite nice at present, long may he remain so. I had a game of chess last night with M'Tutor and beat which rather pleased me as he only gave me a castle. We had rather a difficult holiday task paper, I hope I have passed but we shan't know till tomorrow. We did not have to quote 24 lines. I had to read hard on Friday to finish the book as the exam was at 4.30 on Friday. M'dame has got a new coral necklace of great size. Fancy there being such a rush for the Merry Widow I hope we shall get seats. I am writing this in the school library, there is a frightful fug, you could cut it with a knife, there are about 65 chaps here. How is Squax, what day does he go to Eastbourne I wonder. The Beagles went out yesterday but there was not much scent. Rody has not come back yet. Much love to Pam, Philip Ruth and Tib.

9th Feb. 1908.

. . . All those who wished were addressed by the unemployed in the school yard. It was rather interesting to hear socialist views from the unemployed themselves, but you will see it all in The Daily Express. We had a good run with the Beagles last Tuesday of about 1 hour and killed but of course it was mostly in a circle. I played chess with M'Tutor last night and he won two games on the strength of that he asked me out to dinner. I think Heygate is awfully nice, I shall stick up for him to Uncle Reg. I should have liked to have gone to see the collection of animals at the Duke of Bedford's it must have been great fun. The old Hag is rather crusty this half. I have had a cold for some time and she has not let me stay out one early school. I overslept myself the day before yesterday I woke up ½ a minute before school time, so I turned over and went to sleep again. The Head only gave me an hour's work in pupil room so I lost nothing.

¶ Two letters follow, written to his step-father on his return from spending the Easter holidays at the Villa Cipressi:

Eton, 3rd May, 1908.

My darling Pam.—The floods are still very high but they have gone down about 7 inches. As no boating is allowed, Reggie [Hargreaves] and I managed to get leave from M'Tutor to go for a bike ride. We went to Reggie's home for the afternoon, and had great fun. We went over the fields in their punt. . . We had to go through about ¾ of a mile of flood water in a wagon. I am up to Heygate again. There were about 800 people on board the boat crossing the other day, I have never seen so much luggage as there was at Charring Cross. . . . Philip was very good on the journey and quite enjoyed himself. He was quite fairly cheerful when I saw him off at King's Cross. . . .

Eton, Thursday, 14th May, 1908.

. . . I am so sorry I did not write on Sunday, but I went out for a walk in the evening as it was so fine, and when I came back I had only just time to do my Sunday Questions. It is not much of a day today, inclined to rain, but I hope it will be fine enough to go on the river this afternoon. At present I am bussy trying to pass my proficiency, we have to go to a lecture in the morning, and drill just before lunch, which makes it rather hard to find time to prepare my work. If you pass this thing one is made a lance-corporal in the volunteers at the end of next half. Reggie Hargreaves has invited me to go and stay with them in Scotland for a bit next holidays. I can't quite make up my mind to tear myself away yet, but still it is rather tempting as there is topping fishing. If I went I should only stay there 5 or 6 days. . . . Brune took me out for a motor drive the other day with some friends of his (Two girls and a man) when we returned Brune brought them into my room . . . where the man and one of the girls proceeded to *smoke !!* They also smoked in B.'s room. I thought the smell would never go out of my room, and I fully expected to have M'Tutor rampaging round in the evening, only luckily he did not come round that night. Please give my love to all the large party at Varenna. . . .

In the early autumn of 1908 Dick's mother and step-father went to America to visit an old friend in Connecticut, and made a tour on through Canada to Washington. Dick writes of this to Mr. Astley on 12th October, from Eton.

. . . I *am* so glad you are having such a splendid time. I think that everything sounds fascinating except the voyage. My goodness what a fright you must have had. Not much news from here, nothing exciting has happened so far this half, the usual routine of football etc. except the professional Marathon race on Saturday. I suppose you saw in the paper that the Frenchman did the course nearly half an hour quicker than Dorando did it in the last race. It looked almost exactly like the last one. I believe the King is coming to open the memorial hall about 20th November and it seems as though they are going to take the extra week off the end of this half, so we shall have it before Xmas. We have been having most frightfully hot weather but it has turned cooler now which is a good thing from the point of view of football. I have not had my usual day's outing at Shottesbrook yet, I hope they are not going to forget me. I really cannot spin out my letter any longer as there has been no break in the monotony of any sort. . . .

During this half (1908) Dick was hurt in an accident at football, which necessitated an operation for hernia, and he was debarred for some time from games, and, what to him was a still greater deprivation, from rowing, and this to some extent influenced the decision that he should leave Eton at the end of the following summer half, although his fear that the accident might prevent

him from getting his Upper Boats were not realised. He was in the "Prince of Wales" when the next list came out.

¶While he was laid up various letters were written from his house at Eton, of which the following have survived:

Eton, 17th Nov. 1908.

Dearest Dick.—I was so glad to hear from your Mother that your operation has been so successful—it is splendid, you must buck up now and get quite well again. Poor old dear I am sorry for you, I do wish I could have had it instead. I went away for sick leave from Friday till Monday—the "man" gave it to me like a lamb; of course I sent my mother to him, I shouldn't have got it otherwise. I spent hours Monday afternoon waiting for the King of Sweden to appear—what a bounder he does look too.... We shall soon be in training for the House matches now—did you hear that m'tutor's were beaten on Friday by Tatham's? Babington said the House played disgracefully. Everyone misses you terribly—I don't know how I shall get through the rest of this half without you. "Barcles" sends you his best love, heaps from myself.

Ever yours affec. Reginald Hargreaves.

P.S. Will you let me come and see you some day a little later on, that is if m'tutor will give me dentist leave or something?

23rd Nov. 1908.

Dear old Dick.—Please forgive me for not having written before but you know how hopeless I am about letters, I feel such a cad not having done so. Have you been receiving the Chronicle, as I have ordered it to go to you for a month, which I thought ought to see you out of bed and home again. I am so glad you are feeling easy again now, and have only to recover slowly and surely. We are playing slightly better in the house matches, but we are still very bad, and I am pretty certain we shall not get very far in the House Ties. Our Lower Boy beat R. de H's easily last week on Thursday, and play old Bent's tomorrow. I suppose you heard about the beagles last Tuesday finding a fox near Dawney village and killing him in Vaughan's fives' court in the New Courts after 35 minutes of the best. The sickening part was that I was asked out and couldn't go because I had long school, though I shouldn't have been able to keep up it would have been a good thing to have been out in... It is dreadfully dull here without you, and you cannot imagine how dreadfully P and I and the whole house miss you. Will you be coming back next half? do if you are all right, don't otherwise. I must stop now, as the old lady has started winking the light, so goodbye and mind you take care of yourself. Will write again shortly.

Yours penitently and affectly, Geoffrey W. Barclay.

¶Dick spent a part of the Christmas holidays at Acton Reynold, and went to a couple of balls, which he wrote he had much enjoyed, ..."but still I shall be very glad to get back to you all." On his return to Eton he found impending changes...."There are 14 fellows in this house leaving at the end of next term," he writes

to his mother (5th Feb., 1909). "Rody is among the leavers, he is going up to Oxford next October. . . . Trial eights are in full swing, it is the most awful bore not being allowed to row. I very much doubt if they will give me my 'Upper Boats' in consequence. . . . I terribly grudge all the practice I am losing on the river. We have not done much with the Beagles yet, scent has been so bad, and as for the plough . . . you pick up a ton on each foot. . . ."

¶ To H.D.A.: Eton, 31st Jan. 1909.

. . . I am so glad the entertainment was such a success, but how I wish I could have seen it, however I hope I shall be present when Sarah Gamp and Betsey Prig is acted. . . . Seligmann now runs with the beagles; while getting through some barbed wire he tore his coat into two pieces and went on for the rest of the day with it flopping behind him. I tried to teach Miss Harrison Wolseley Patience, but I could not remember how many cards you had in a row. I thought it was nine, and that is what we put. The old lady was quite pleased to learn a new one. I am up to Heygate, I rather like him at present. I heard from, why who do you think? Why from . . . you will *never* guess so I must tell you—our ORIGINAL Squax, *Not* from Bessie, so snits! I *thought* you would guess her. Tell him I will write soon, to-morrow if possible. Barclay bust a pane of glass in my window this morning; it fell into the street with a crash, to the danger of the pedestrians below.

8th Feb. 1909.

. . . I believe M'Tutor has written to you about my leaving, hasn't he? Whatever he says about a Responsion division, there is not half or even a quarter as much chance of passing from here (working in a division of 32) as there would be with a crammer with two other fellows at the most. Last half there was a Responsion division, and only 5 people passed out of 25. You need not give a definite answer . . . until the middle of the half. Slaney is going up for Responsions this half, and we shall see how he gets on. So when you write . . . say that it is most likely that I shall go at the end of the summer, as that will passify him, if he thinks that there may be a chance of my stay on (although I have not much intention of doing so) especially if I don't get into either of the Eights, and I think it very doubtful if I shall even be given my Upper Boats owing to this operation. . . .

¶ To his Mother, in March, 1909:

. . . We had a splendid time with the beagles yesterday, killing another fox after an hour's jolly run. Luckily it was rather a circle, or we should not have seen much, only fortunately we were able to cut corners. I got up suddenly in a ploughed field within 20 yards of the hounds, I got 3 topping views of it, 2 just before it was killed. Dick Rowley was over here this afternoon, came over from Aldershot in a taxi. He is riding in the Coldstream point to point this week, he seems to think he has a good chance of winning it, I don't know wheather he has or not. . . .

. . . I suppose you have been bussy hunting, I wonder what sort of sport you have been having. The Beagles have had quite good scent the last few days, so perhaps you have too. I have not been out much lately as I have been playing fives. We go for a field day on Thursday, I hope it will be a good one to make up for my missing the last. Rody and Inigo Jones returned from their exam at Oxford last Friday, they seem to think that they have failed, which is rather a bore for them, as you only get two shots for Christchurch, Magdalen and new College, if you fail twice they won't take you, so they will only have one more shot. . . . M'Dame is getting quite spritely now, she comes down to meals as usual. The food arrived quite safely yesterday, we began on it to-day, thank you so much for sending it. The School sports are on Saturday, the finals of the 100 yds. quater mile and hurdles, also the tug of war (wet bobs v. dry) Mr. Conybeare was much amused the other day, when I went to Extras because he had just had a wire from a man, to have his son, *born 1 hour* put down for his (C.'s) house. One of Miss Trew's boys 13 years hence.

Very much love to all, Your loving Dick.

Eton, March, 1909.

My darling Pam.—I hope by now you are enjoying warm and fine weather sitting in one of Love Bird's terraces, or upon the marble staircases. It has been very cold here during the last few days, especially during leave days, and we had a powdering of snow on Wednesday night. I missed your company very much when I was on leave. It is a pity we could not race last Saturday, if only the weather had been like the Saturday before it would have been topping. I am simply counting the days till the holidays—how much water is there in the port of the boathouse, I suppose it will be quite deep soon, with all the snows off the mountain. You know the motor engine that was in that weed cutting plant at home which was a failure, Well, I asked Bingham when I was on leave, if there was any objection to it going out to Varenna, and he said he thought I might just as well take it out as leave it doing nothing in the motor house. I do so want to have a boat built for it at Como [where the hotel launches were made]. It only weighs 1 hundredweight, so it will be moderately easy to take out and it will escape duty, won't it, as it has been used. It is the most beautiful little engine $4\frac{1}{2}$ horse power, and would drive a small open launch along well. I am most excited about it as you may have observed after a page and a half on it. I think a boat the same shape as the *Signorina*, only 2 or 3 times the size would be best, don't you? Rody and Inigo Jones went up for their Oxford exam yesterday; I am glad it is not December next when I shall sit there with a pen and a blank brain. Heaps of love, Your loving Dick.

¶ To his Mother:

27th March, 1909.

. . . I heard from Mr. Mylius about 5 days ago, saying he had ordered the boat; I wrote at once to tell Father about the change of plans, which he will have received by now. There is no use delaying the engine being sent off, as Timossi started building it last Monday, and will be well on in it by this time. I have written to Pitt & Scott and made arrangements with them. They guar-

antee to send [the engine] out in 7 days by the quick route price 23/- or 21 days by the slow, price 10/6d. As Timossi will build [the boat] for £24. it is much better getting it there, as Winter asks £32 and it would cost £8. carriage, and then possibly arrive broken. I have got Ruth's belated birthday present at last, a train which I hope she will like. . . . Sidney Evans took me up to see the Airship and Motor boat show at Olympia last Thursday. I went on board the Wellman airship which is about to start for the Pole. There were some A1 motor boats to hold 12 people, cabin, etc., about £150. . . . M'Tutor says he wants to know definitely about my leaving, as he wants to arrange about his new boys. Will you please write and tell him that you have quite decided that I should leave at the end of next half. We have no option, as Christ Church won't take anyone who has failed twice, and it would be a pity to waste a shot from here (crowded division, etc.). Rody failed the other day, so he has only one more shot. You might, at the same time tell M'Tutor that you are going straight to Italy, and ask permission for me to get away after "Reading Over" on Wednesday 7th April. I hope to get away with any luck on Thursday morning about nine o'clock. I have not had a chance of asking M'Tutor yet, as I was asleep when he came round last night, but I will ask him tonight when he comes round, he is such a rum old cove he would probably refuse if I went to ask him at anything but the set time. We have done 4 Trials, two of which I did farely well, the other two —— . . . We have 3 more tomorrow. Joan and Mary and their Ma came down here on Saturday and I think enjoyed themselves. They arrived about 3 o'clock and went away at 6. I took them round the usual things, and also to see the Beagles being fed at the kennels. We had tea in my room at 5 and for a wonder I did not starve my guests. I am sorry Ruthie has had flue what a bore for her. I had a long letter from Our Squax last Friday full of interesting information about the fish caught by Adamo. Dick Rowley came down here about a week ago, he intended to come and watch the sports (races, tugs of war, etc.) but as usual missed his train and did not arrive here till tea time, he had tea with me, and had to go back to London soon after, he really is a casual sort of cove, he told me he had missed ten trains during the last fortnight. Yesterday evening the finals of the school boxing took place. The drill hall was crowded (the vulgar flock to see blood). One chap was knocked down and stunned and had to be given brandy, and in the Heavy Weights Gold ma. was knocked over the ropes by Grenfell, they were both covered with gore. . . . I will telegraph, M'Tutor has to ask the Head wheather I can get away on Thursday morning, but you may count on it, as I am certain to get it.

¶ The boat whose construction he had planned so enthusiastically ("Rondinella") was built and afforded him some amusement on the Lake of Como, although she was not an entire success. Later he replaced her by a beautiful and very fast launch, built by Saunders (Cowes), named "Oleander," frequently mentioned in subsequent letters. This boat was a great delight to Dick. She was com-

mandeered in 1916 by the Italian Government for war service, and was most valuable in patrol work in the Adriatic, from her speed and seaworthiness. She even entered the enemy's waters in Fiume Harbour several times.

Eton, 9th May, 1909.

My darling Pam and Mum.—I arrived here quite safely on Thursday night. Although the weather was lovely overhead on Thursday there was a strong wind on the Channel and we had rather a rough crossing. Showers of spray came on to the deck at intervals, and quite two thirds of the passengers were ill, or on the point of it. Pippin felt ill, but was not actually sick. Wasn't it funny we met Mr. and Mrs. Peregrine Birch in the restaurant of the Gare du Nore. They had arrived that same morning from Pekin, via the Trans-Siberian railway. They had been in Pekin just a fortnight before. They stayed at Moscow and Harbin etc., on the way, and at some of the places they had to have a guard of soldiers. Fancy, they were offered two beautiful Pekinese for £3 the pair, they said they had no noses and were very small. They saw all over the Summer Palace, which is now open to foreigners 1 day in two months, they said it was just like Fairy Land. Auntie Nee met us at Charing Cross where we arrived very late owing to having been 1½ hours in crossing. . . . We had the holiday task paper yesterday Mother, it was not very hard and I was able to do a good bit of it.

Sunday.—It has been looked over since I wrote the beginning of this letter, and my paper was one of the 4 best in the div. We are having cloudless weather not a cloud in the sky, but so far there has been a strong wind, which has made going on the river rather tiresome, I wonder if it is blowing on the lake too. . . .

Much love to you both, Your loving Dick.

¶ To his Mother:

26th June, 1909.

. . . I am very glad that Squeaky is to come here, as I think he will like the fellows. I am sending you a house list, as it may interest you to know the names of the fellows who will be here next half; I have scratched off the names of those leaving, which leaves rather a gap, doesn't it? Isn't the weather unlucky, most disappointing, however, the fireworks were excellent, far the best I have ever seen, much better than last year or the year before. I am fascinated by Tom's motor, isn't it a little ripper and so silent. What about Henley? You know it is Tuesday week, and I expect we shall go Tuesday and not Wednesday. Will either you or Pam be going? I know Uncle Reg. is going I expect he will go the first day. Anyhow mention Henley leave in your next letter to me, so that I can show it to M'Tutor to get my leave ticket. How does one get into Phyllis Court, it is much the best place to meet anyone. I rather want if possible to bring Barclay with me to Henley, as he has no one to go with. I believe the big Siddeleys above 20 horse power are very good, but I am told the small ones are rather noisy and unreliable. . . . I must stop as I have to go to Math. extras with Conybeare.

5th July, 1909.

I am so looking forward to Tuesday, I do hope the weather will keep fine. The special train gets to Henleyat 11.45, can we get straight into Phyllis Court, it is much the best place to meet. The Eight have drawn St. John's College, Oxford, who are not bad, but I think we ought to win. The eight did not go extra well to-day—they rowed a half course against a scratch eight composed of 5 boys in the Upper boats (of which I was one), 2 masters and an old Etonian, and were beaten by us. However they were more in the middle of the stream than us which made it harder for them. I am getting very depressed at the thought of leaving, it will be dreadful when the time comes. Henry Churchill was down here today, he tells me he is in "Lloyds," and earns "Twenty pounds a year," rather a scanty living. It is *most* exciting about the new Siddeley motor, I expect it goes like mad. I am very much looking forward to seeing it on Tuesday, I do hope it will come in time. We have started practising in our "house four," but have not got into the new boat yet. I am afraid there will be some very good ones this year, Martin's, Heygate's and Brooke's have each got two in the eights. Wasn't it rather good, the three fellows at M'Tutor's got all the wickets in the Eton and Winchester match, Slaney, Fowler and Boscawen. We have the three best bowlers in the school, which looks like winning the house cricket cup, doesn't it? . . .

From Dick's House Master: Eton, 29th July, 1909.

Dear Lady Sutton.—I enclose Dick's report for the last time, I regret to say. . . . He has done very well in the four years in which he has been in my House, and we shall all miss him a great deal next Half. He is a very cheerful and good-tempered boy, and at the same time, sound and reliable, and it has been a great pleasure to me to have him in the House. . . . I shall follow his career with interest and wish him every success. I am putting his minor in his room. . . .

Yours sincerely, C. M. Wells.

Another of his tutors who echoes the general regret at Dick's leaving wrote: "He is developing into a man whose advice people will be glad to ask." The room that had been Dick's for more than five years was given to his brother Philip Astley, whose initials may still be seen cut deep in the window-sill, so that it was in the family possession for about nine years. Dick's desire to go to college was rather inspired by the fact that some of his friends were doing so, and from the attraction of comparatively familiar surroundings, than any definite intentions for his future career. He was in no hurry to assume the responsibilities that were bound to come in due course, and was bent on gaining experience. He paid his first visit to Scotland this summer, staying with Captain and Mrs. Hargreaves, in the Highlands of Inverness; his enthusiastic enjoyment of the scenery and sport there is reflected in a letter written soon after his arrival.

¶To his Mother:

Dundreggan Lodge, Glenmoriston, Sunday, 17th August, 1909.

...I arrived here very punctually on Saturday, after a most comfortable journey. It was a good thing I had a sleeper as there was not a single first class seat in the train which was not full.... I think this is the most beautiful place I have ever seen. It is an eight mile drive from here to Invermoriston, up the most lovely river valley you ever saw. The river is quite lovely, all rushing over great rocks with frightfully deep pools. About half the way from Invermoriston is by the river, with beautiful woods on each side stretching right up the hills. We are going out after the grouse tomorrow, and on Tuesday I am going up to one of the lochs to fish. They have only had one day's grouse shooting so far —on the 12th they got 67. Captain Hargreaves was salmon fishing all Saturday but did not get a rise. They caught a 20 pounder five miles up the river, one of the people in the next lodge which is eight miles off. The hills here round the house are very high, you can see the stags on them through a telescope. Loch Ness reminded me very much of Como, it seems about the same length and breadth. Reggie caught six trout on Saturday in one of the lochs, you have to walk six miles to get to it. It is full of fish as it is hardly ever fished....

¶During the autumn that followed, Dick read for Responsions with the rector of Nuneham, the Rev. H. Alington, generally returning for the week-end to Benham.

¶To his Mother:

Nuneham Rectory, 7th Nov. 1909.

...I am sorry to say the old boy match had to be postponed, owing to the Provost's death, so I did not go down to Eton yesterday. I was most awfully disappointed, but perhaps we shall have it next Saturday instead. I went to Newbury races the first day—there were not very many people there as it was wet during the morning and looked very bad, but it did not actually rain during the afternoon. Mrs Best was there and the gay Miss P. We have had four top hole days running now, I do hope the next three will be as good. We go to Benham to-morrow afternoon.... I went to Oxford the other day and saw the Arcadians, it is a ripping little theatre, quite new. There is a village dance in Alington's barn every Friday evening from 7 till 10, which is great fun, and Mr Harcourt has given £5 to have a wooden floor put down. I shall be quite good at valetas and military two-steps by the servants' ball....

Nuneham Park, 28th Nov. 1909.

My dearest Father and Mother.—I think it will be much nicer going down to Eton on Saturday, than on St. Andrew's Day. There are about twenty people staying here, about eight came yesterday for a Saturday to Monday. We were twelve the first evening. We had an awfully nice shoot—eight guns. I will try to remember a few of the names.... We got six hundred and something pheasants yesterday. I shot fairly decently at times, luckily when I stood next to Harcourt. I got twenty at one stand, at which I was quite pleased as they were nearly all high ones. This house is awfully nice inside: they have

got the most enormous number of men servants, I counted three butlers and five footmen at dinner last night, and I think there are more. I would much rather have been at home with you, it is a great pity I could not have slipped off home last night. Very much love, Your loving Dick.

¶ To his Mother: Nuneham Rectory, 2nd Dec. 1909.

. . . Here are two letters I had this morning, one from the "old hen," the other from Aunt Alice. I should rather like to accept them in a way. But I see the Old Hen's invitation is to go to a dance at . . . to which you have a pet aversion haven't you? Anyhow I ought to write and thank pretty soon, as it is very good of her to ask me. Poor old Alington has got a fearful cold, so I offered to read the lessons for him at his Advent service yesterday evening. It was very brave of me as I felt in rather a funk, however I prepared them well beforehand, and got through them alright, there were only about thirty-five people in the church, so it was not as alarming as it might have been. Alington has retired to bed to try and get his cold well before Sunday. Mrs. Alington had a rummage sale in the village yesterday, and I dressed up as a girl and sold hats. I hired a top-hole wig in Oxford and no one recognised me. The villagers kept on coming up and saying, "How much is this one, Miss?" One woman came up to me with a pair of stays she had got hold of from somewhere, and asked me to price them. . . .

FROM 1910 TO OCTOBER, 1914.

THE autumn of 1909 passed uneventfully. Dick read steadily with his tutor, and had some hunting and shooting at Benham, enjoying—as was his wont—everything in turn. But he was not made for a student of books, and the influence of his uncle, Sir Walter Corbet,* was in favour of the Army rather than college as a training ground for his future life. Dick failed by a few marks to pass Responsions at Christmas, and gave up further thoughts of going to Oxford. His name was sent in during the following spring for nomination to the 1st Life Guards, and his commission in this regiment was the last one approved by King Edward VII; it was signed by King George V, within a few weeks of his accession, in May, 1910.

¶ It would be difficult to imagine a more joyous début in the world of men than Dick's, possessed as he was of all that is most desired; health and good looks, an ideally beautiful home and ample fortune, a radiantly happy nature and a charm that was

*Before this year 1910 ended Sir W. Corbet died in the prime of life, to the sorrow of all who knew him.

irresistible. Few enter life so richly endowed, and perhaps still fewer so simple and unspoilt. He made many new friends in the next few years, but never neglected his older and possibly duller ones. He was always the same to those who had once won his affection, however far their paths in life diverged. And keenly as he enjoyed the gaiety of the day, London life in itself did not attract him. He would often leave town and go off, either with some intimate, or alone, to Benham, to the country pursuits in which he delighted.

¶ Writing from town, on his return from a visit to his mother in Italy, towards the end of the summer of 1910, he says:

I got back to Benham by the five o'clock train after a very good and quick journey. I found I had to be in barracks by 11.30 a.m. yesterday, so I went up by 9.56. I am in Portal's room for the moment, who is away on leave—until mine is ready. They have started to paper and paint it, a white paper with white painted door and window, so soon it will look a bit better. My daily programme at present is this: 8 to 9.30, Riding school; 10 to 10.45, Fencing; 12 to 1.0, Inspect stables; 2 to 2.45, Drill. After 2.45 I am free. I have 23 horses in my troop which I have to inspect from 12 to 1.0 every day and watch groomed. When I have got my drills over I shall be free at 1.0 o'clock, except the days I am orderly officer (which occurs about twice a week in the winter) or King's Guard at Whitehall. The Orderly Officer has to be in uniform in barracks all day except from 2 to 5 and of course all the evening. There are comparatively few officers here at the present moment, only about 7 altogether. I rather like the riding school at present, but I expect I shall get rather sick of it. It seems a pity to be in London during this lovely weather, but still it is much less vile than I thought it would be.

¶ A fortnight later:

... I managed to get down to Benham last Saturday until Sunday night, which was rather nice. I have got the carpet and furniture for my room, and the papering and painting is finished, so I shall get into it shortly, it really doesn't look so bad now it has been done up. I got a very nice bed at Heal's the same as the one in my room at the Cipressi, two nice chests of drawers, copies of old ones in mahogany, and a very nice green carpet. I dined with Bos and Puss,* poor Bos has got a bad swollen face so does not feel very grand. I have been several times to Rutland Gate, once almost the first day I arrived here; Jim is there until 25th of this month. I went down to Hampstead last week with him to play golf. Auntie Nee came to London on Monday, and I am going to dine and go to the play with her this evening, or rather she is coming with me, and we are going to dine at 44 Rutland Gate. I go to about two plays

*Mr. and Mrs. T. E. Boscawen, the former one of R.V.S.'s trustees and a valued friend.

per week which I rather like, but they are a poor exchange for Benham and Varenna. I am sure you will be amused to hear I have had a letter from . . . utter humbug from beginning to end, spiced with snobbery. . . . I may get down to Benham Saturday week. . . .

4th Nov. 1910.

. . . I am going to Benham tomorrow, until Sunday evening. Squax will turn up by the train which gets in 1.49 I suppose. I went down to Eton last Saturday and played for the old boys against the house at football, and went on to Benham in the evening. Uncle Reg came down late on Saturday and went back with me on Sunday evening—he was up in London on business. I could not get down to the races this week, as I should have had to cut drill, to do so which would not have been very favourably received. Canon Maul* has been in London a couple of nights, we dined and went to the play together last night. I go to my dancing classes on Monday and Tuesday evenings and am getting on quite well and enjoy them very much. Caledon comes back on Monday, and the Queen goes out of London so we shan't be kept at it quite so much I hope. I went and saw the Miss Spooner's the other afternoon. Sister Annie gave me the most excellent tea; the home is quite full. I went to the motor show this afternoon but have not definitely ordered my new car. Is it the 16th or 17th you arrive here?

¶His mother returned to Benham for the winter, and Dick's letter for her birthday is addressed to her there from London:

Regent's Park Barracks, 23rd Nov. 1910.

My dearest Mother.—Just a line to wish you *very* many happy returns on your birthday morning. I am sorry I shall not be there to wish it in person, but we will have a good time in the evening. I hope you will like the book. I have had a few others sent down which we can look through when I come down on Saturday, if you would prefer any of them, as that was the arrangement I made with Bumpus that you were to take your choice and send back the rest. Ever so much love, from your loving Dick.

¶Dick and his mother hunted a good deal that season, and his letters on the subject are characteristic.

16th Jan. 1911.

My darling Mum.— . . . I went down to Nipper's and rode the new horses last Thursday. Tom rode the mare "Take Care" on Tuesday and had a very rough time. He could not hold her a bit, and she rushed her fences, without rising much at them, and in consequence fell on her head twice, but without any damage to either herself or Tom. Tom said she tore most of the fences out by the roots. I rode "Ratoath," the other one, first horse on Thursday, and he went beautifully. Perfect manners and jumped beautifully. We had rather a poor day, but had quite a nice little run in the morning of about half an hour, with

*Rector of Henley-on-Thames.

lots of jumping. I rode "Take Care" 2nd horse, but we did nothing in the afternoon, so I hadn't much chance to see what she was like, she pulled a good deal, but jumped very well when checked. Uncle Nipper is going to put Mr. Gordon on her on Tuesday, who is the most awfully good horseman (he trains steeplechasers and lives at Wroughton about 3 miles from Swindon) so I shall shortly hear all about her, but I feel sure that freshness and want of work is all that is wrong. "Ratoath" would carry you beautifully any day you like to go down, and you would have no difficulty in riding him. I am on duty to-day, which is a bore, hence I could not get down to Benham. And my troop starts training on Monday, which means a bad fortnight ahead—drilling them on the square at 7.45 each morning, and no days away except Saturday after about 11 o'clock, so I shall not get any more days hunting for some time. But I shall be able to get home next Saturday by 12.35 train I hope. I gave the Harry Mylius's an evening out yesterday, we went and saw Cyril Maud's play. Beyond that I have been nowhere. I lugged off down to the dancing class on Tuesday, only to find that the class had been changed from that evening, so I had to come back having wasted a mass of time getting there. How long does Miss T. stay, I should like to come down and dine and have a lesson one day this week, if I can manage it. I went to a clay pigeon place this afternoon, and had rather fun. It is down in the suburbs, more or less country, and they send the clay pigeons off the top of a high tower, so they are at a tremendous height. . . . I am glad you got second prize with your litter, I saw Mrs. Calley out hunting on Thursday, who told me you had. Please give my love to all at Benham. Ever your very loving Dick.

King's Life Guard, Whitehall, 2nd March, 1911.

. . . Could you hunt in the Vale on Saturday, I am going and shall ride the black horse. The meet is some little way from Nipper's, but you could go on in the car. You ought to get to Holdcroft by soon after 10. I should think 10.15 would be soon enough. I come off guard to-morrow and shall go down to-morrow afternoon and come back with you Saturday evening. Don't come unless you feel fit. . . . I think I shall go to Nuneham for the day on Monday perhaps. The dance really went off most awfully well, there were only about 4 or 6 funnies, the other 70 were all very nice, and good dancers, and quite a nice looking lot. We went on till 4 o'clock and everyone enjoyed it very much I think. . . . I hope Pam is quite well again by now.

Will you please send me a wire to barracks before 1 o'clock to-morrow if you are coming Saturday, as I shall want to arrange . . . about sending the horse on for you. . . .

¶About this time (1910-1911) electric motor power was beginning to be adapted for many new uses in boats of all kinds, as well as in the new inventions of aero and hydro-planes. Dick was always keenly interested in the development of mechanics, and in every form of boat.

¶The two following letters are written to his mother, who was again at Varenna, in April and May, 1911: Benham, April, 1911.

. . . I am so glad you had a good journey out and caught all connections, etc. You will be glad to hear my motor license is still intact. My car starts very easily now. I sent it to the works for a day, and they have made it quite alright. Uncle Reg. and I had a very good run up last Sunday in 2 hrs. 20 min. I did not go to Acton Reynold for Easter after all, but to the Isle of Wight to see the new motor boat building. I came here Sunday evening and I have to go back to London to-night. I fished yesterday, and caught 3 good trout, the weather is just like summer and has been since last Wednesday. I motored down to the I. of Wight. Tom and Uncle Nipper came with me. We drove the car on to the steamer and took it across to Cowes. I stayed with Aunt Zoe, and the others went to Aunt Toto. On Saturday afternoon we went to Bembridge and saw Aunt Anna who is very well. And I had a race in one of the club boats, which was good fun as there was a nice breeze. The new motor boat is getting on very fast. One skin is on and they are starting to put on the 2nd (out of 3). The planks are so beautifully joined that it looks like one piece of wood. Bogie is doing his first day's mowing to-day which he does not appear to be altogether enjoying. I hear from Mansell that that little brute of a Rondinella* has broken one of her piston rings. Tibbie has gone home. She went on Saturday so I just missed her. I expect to find Ruth's badge in Barracks when I go back, I hope you have not kept her birthday yet. I will send it on to you at once. My charger is going quite sound, it can't possibly have nivicular disease or anything of the sort. I shall have it back again in barracks next week. . . . It only takes 1 hour and 50 minutes to motor to Southampton from here, it is 12 miles beyond Winchester, so you ought to run down and have a look at the boat when you get home. Please give my best love to all; I wish I was with you, I expect you have got this lovely weather too. It is good news the terrace is getting on so well. Regent's Park Barracks, 1st May, 1911.

. . . Ever so many thanks for your birthday letter. I am so sorry not to have written to you before, but as you know I have hurt my arm, and could not use it. Have you heard that my motor has been smashed up, a motor 'bus ran into it in the Edgware Road (I was not in it) and has done about £50 worth of damage, and I cannot use it for a fortnight. Isn't it a bore. I just ran home for Sat. night and Bos and Puss came for the week-end, but I had to come back here this morning. I hope to get two days leave this week before going to Pirbright next Saturday. . . We have got a big dinner on to-night which will be rather a bore I expect. Lord Kitchener is coming and several other big bugs. There are unceasing balls from now onwards, I went to 3 last week, but shall not go to more than 1 this week, although there is one every night. What a time you must be having at Varenna with this lovely weather; I wish to goodness I could be there too; except that little beast of a launch would annoy me so, but I hope you have the piston rings by now. . . .

* R.V.S.'s steam launch on Lake Como.

¶It was the year of King George's Coronation, and of the many festivities in connection with this that Dick attended, the one he enjoyed the best was the Naval Review at Spithead. His mother felt obliged to remain to preside over the village fête in honour of the Coronation, but his step-father was of the party present on that splendid day. Dick writes of it to his mother soon after:

Regent's Park Barracks, 27th June, 1911.

. . . I got back here about 3.30 on Sunday morning, as we were lucky enough to catch the last train up which left at 12 o'clock. . . . We had rather bad luck as we were at Blockhouse fort (not ¼ mile from the station) at 11 o'clock but could not get a boat to take us across, and had to wait for the steam tug boat which was 20 minutes late owing to the crowd in the harbour. In spite of getting soaked I enjoyed it very much, especially the illuminations, which were quite magnificent as father will have told you. I will tell you all our doings when we meet. I shall not be able to come to Benham to-morrow, as I had hoped, as I am the Lieut. for the escort to the Gala at His Majesty's to-morrow. I think we go inside, which is something, and see the show. I am orderly to-day and so have not been able to get down to see the pictures as we are on guard this week. I also miss the Grosvenor House Ball, which is to be in uniform, and so should be rather a fine sight. Looking forward to Brinsop at the end of the week. . . . I am so glad the Stockcross festivities went off so well. . . .

Regent's Park Barracks, 7th July, 1911.

. . . Will you please entrust Philip for 3 passes for Phyllis Court, for himself, Geoffrey and me. I am going to motor to Reading, meet Pippin and take him to Henley and we shall come on home as soon as Eton have rowed, which I hope will be pretty early. Geoffrey B. can come Saturday to Monday so I am bringing him. I am nearly dead with the heat. . . . Thank father for the Zoo tickets which I have now forged his name on.

Tresco Abbey, Isles of Scilly, 14th July.

. . . This place is looking perfectly fascinating, the garden is much more lovely than I had expected. My canoe arrived quite safely, it is ripping having it here. I got up before breakfast this morning and sailed from New Grimsby right round to Pentle Bay for it (half round the island). It is so nice being able to go in about 6 inches of water. We are going out pollock fishing to-day, and Friday we are going to the Pole. I shall be sick I expect. Father says he is going to stay here or go to Annet.

¶The Labour troubles of 1911 broke out in a railway strike in August that was intended to lead to a general strike and paralysis of industry, and might have done so but for the fact that Germany showed signs of precipitating the war for which she had so long prepared. Immediate steps were taken by the Government to use

the naval and military forces to prevent a revolutionary outbreak at home, and to deter foreign aggression. All officers on leave were recalled to duty, Dick, of course, among them. He writes to his mother from London on 19th August:

. . . Here we are confined to barracks, which is just the same as being in jail. I got back to Pirbright about 10.50 the other night, and went to bed; at 1.30 we had to turn out and march to Brookwood where we got a special train, and came straight here, where we have remained ever since ready to turn out at a moment's notice. There has been practically no disturbance in London, but I suppose it will come to-morrow or the next day. Auntie Nee goes abroad to-day, she is at Rutland Gate now. Uncle Reg. is also here stranded, and cannot get back to Acton Reynold. He is probably going back to-day in my motor. I don't know when I shall see you again, some say we shall be here for ten days more at least, but I hope it may not be as long as that. I suppose Geoffrey has gone, or is he stranded at Benham? . . .

The strike ended sooner and with less trouble than had been anticipated, and the 1st Life Guards returned to their quarters at Pirbright, from where Dick was often able to spend week-ends at Benham, during that lovely summer, 1911. His mother and Mr. Astley were looking for a country house in which to settle when Dick came of age, and Dick motored about with them to see one place and another. The choice fell on Brinsop Court, a beautiful 14th, 15th & 16th century house about six miles from Hereford, at that time used as a farm-house, and needing much alteration for modern tenants, but structurally perfect of its type. It was some time before arrangements were completed for the purchase of this property, which was in part Dick's gift to his mother and step-father, and the restoration of the house and grounds was completed only a few months before the outbreak of war in 1914. Towards the end of September Mr. Astley and Lady Sutton went back to Lake Como, and Dick's next letter is to plan a visit to them there.

Regent's Park Barracks, 1st Oct. 1911.

My darling Mother.—I hope you have had a good journey and caught your connection alright at Bale. I hope to start on Wednesday or Thursday if all's well, but I will send you a wire as soon as I know. I shall probably have to return about 18th. I wonder if Auntie Nee would be coming back then. I am making all arrangements for launching the Oleander safely, directions from Saunders, etc. How vexing this war is. I hope G. and A. have not had to go or that Michael's nose has not been carried away by a shell. Please give my love to everybody—so hoping to be with you soon. Your ever loving Dick.

¶He carried out his plan, and joined the family party the following week, his new launch "Oleander" arriving at the same time, in which they made many voyages about the lake, landing sometimes at Menaggio to play golf, or at the villages near Colico to explore more unfrequented parts of that lovely district. The days passed all too quickly, and Dick writes again from London, on October 19th, to his mother:

... Back here once more after a first rate journey ... arrived quite punctually and Uncle Reg. caught his train to Acton Reynold quite easily. The weather is still like summer, and I am sorry to say there has been no rain, and the ground is too hard to hunt, Uncle Nipper says. I shall go down home on Saturday. The King and Queen return to London on Monday, so we shall have guards until they go to India. I am going to drive the team this afternoon. I hope I shall not take off the barrack gates on my way out. Give my best love to Pam. ...

¶He had a good deal of shooting that autumn at Benham, and hunted as often as it was possible to get away. The family party reassembled at Benham in November. During the autumn manoeuvres Dick's squadron was brought on to the borders of his own property, an opportunity for hospitality that he did not neglect.

¶To his Mother: Witley Court, Worcester, 10th December.

... Fellowes and I are going to do a scheme on Wednesday next, somewhere in the neighbourhood of Benham, with the B. squadron Non-Commissioned Officers (including Thompson). We would come down, I thought, on Tuesday afternoon and the N.C.O.'s will be coming down on Wednesday morning, and we shall go and do the scheme with them then. But I should like, if you don't mind ... to give them lunch before they return to town. I came here Friday and return to barracks early to-morrow—very nice party and a good shoot yesterday. I shall be down by 3 o'clock on Tuesday. ...

¶Jim Corbet came to spend Xmas at Benham, and he, with Dick, Philip and their mother, hunted about four days a week until the middle of January, when Dick and Philip went back with their cousin to Acton Reynold, and still more on their return. Dick kept an excellent stable and delighted in mounting his friends. He often went over, too, to hunt in the Vale with his uncle, Mr. Cecil Sutton, known as "Nipper." The next letters on hunting are from Holdcroft.

16th Feb. 1912.

... We had an A.1 run in the afternoon over the best bit of the country. I did wish you had been there. I never saw another plough field after you left. We got rid of all the field except about 25, so had a splendid time. I think

you and Jim would do better to come *here* on Friday, as Nipper will motor to the meet with you and show you the way. Be here by 10.30 punctual, 9.15 from Benham. You can both have two horses out, as I don't think I shall hunt on Saturday as Nipper says it is not a very good meet, and none of the family are going to be out. He says you ought to have a good day on Friday. You must come down, I can't see it makes any difference hunting here Friday to hunting with Craven on Saturday, you would have much more fun with Jim and the family. As I am not going to hunt Saturday I shall not want my car, so you and Jim can go back Friday evening. If by any chance you can't get down Friday send Nipper a wire and he will get . . . to have a ride, but I hope you will come . . . .

. . . Got here quite safely last night and found Uncle Nipper asleep in his chair . . . Did not have much of a day to-day, but had a good deal of jumping. Columbine jumped some of the fences very well, others she brushed through rather, but they were not stiff ones, so it did not matter. Trappist arrived safe and well. I am going to ride him with the old B.'s to-morrow. Looking forward to seeing you 10.45 Saturday. We are going to Water Eaton I hear. Nipper is just off to take the chair at a political meeting—he hates it. . . .

It was a first-rate season's sport, comparatively unspoilt by frost or bad weather, and at the close of it Dick rode in several Point-to-Point races—that of the V. W. H. and the regimental races in the Grafton country, and then on 17th March went off to the Villa dei Cipressi, taking his cousin Tom Sutton with him, for three weeks. From there he writes to his mother on 22nd March:

We went to Piona and Gravedona yesterday, it was the most glorious day all day, not a cloud, and as hot as it is at the end of April. We had breakfast in the garden. But to-day it has rained all day without ceasing for a moment, except once when it snowed. I have been trying to think out the people who are coming to the ball on the 25th, I enclose list, I make the number 200; an enormous percentage of which are females, even if the house-parties are evenly divided, which I rather doubt. Will you and father revise and add to the list, and let me have it back; shall I write and get some invitation cards printed or will you do so; I think they ought to go out early in April. I should not bother to try and think up other people, as that is quite a good number, but I expect there are a good many left out who ought to be asked. We went up to golf the day before yesterday, saw the C.s, who are very well, and Chin Chan, the latter was very pleased to see me but bit me before I left. Tom was much struck with everything, and is, I think, enjoying himself. . . . Old Pomi appeared 2 days ago, couldn't hear a word of course. A strong north wind has just sprung up, so I hope we may get a fine day to-morrow. Tom has been taking lots of photos, he is rather good at doing them. Please give my best love to Pam, heaps to yourself. . . .

¶Dick came of age on the 26th April, and three days of entertainment were held at Benham Valence in honour of the event, in which over fifteen hundred guests, in all, took part, including nearly all Dick's near relations and old friends, his neighbours in the county, the principal townsfolk of Newbury, the tenants and estate employees, and their families. All were eager to show their warm feeling for Dick and his family, and for all it was a happy occasion, long remembered. Dick's own words in his speech of thanks to the tenants and villagers are characteristic:

"... I look forward in the near future to getting to know you each personally. I shall always endeavour to keep your welfare uppermost in my mind as long as I may be spared to live here amongst you, and I feel confident we shall always remain as good friends as we are to-day...." He went on to speak of his gratitude to his trustees ... "who have borne so many responsibilities on my behalf. These responsibilities—and they are great—to-day fall upon my own shoulders, I pray that I may properly discharge them to the common interest of all. But the thought—and I am sure you will understand it—which is uppermost in my mind to-day and for all time, is my Mother, who has indeed been a guardian to me...."

¶As he stood on the threshold of his independent life, Dick's whole heart was filled with the thought of his mother, with whom his relationship was, all through life, of the most perfect that this world can know. He realised that to her love, to her training and influence, he owed all that made his happiness, and in all his hopes for the future, his love for her was indissolubly bound. Writing to her from London on 2nd May, 1912, he ends a letter in which he sets out his arrangements for her with the words:

... I can *never* thank you enough for all your intense love during the last 21 years, and for all the work you have done for me lately. I can only say that it has been, is, and will be, enormously appreciated....

Your ever most loving Dick.

¶Dick was keenly desirous of doing his part towards the tenants and dependents of his estates, and one of his first actions after coming of age was to present a recreation ground and miniature rifle range to the village of Stockcross. The old Vicar of the parish, Mr. Ottley, was now failing in health, and unable to deal with the work of the parish; Dick provided a pension for him, and set him-

self to obtain for Stockcross a new Vicar who should make the Church the spiritual home of his people. The living, which was in the gift of the Bishop of Oxford, was offered, at Dick's request, to the Revd. Cuthbert Trower, who had previously combined a private chaplaincy with work in connection with the All Saints' Mission, Pentonville. "Father Cuthbert," as he is best known, had been a close friend of Dick's for some years, and had hitherto refused all offers of livings, but now (really out of affection for Dick), accepted that of Stockcross. Dick restored and added to the Vicarage as a welcome to his friend, and together they carried out many schemes that made for improvement in the village. Among other things Dick renovated the working-men's club, and gave a billiard table for it. He was greatly interested also in the Oxford Mission work in London, especially in that of starting lads of ability and promise in the Colonies. He frequently paid the passages and initial expenses of boys recommended by the Mission, only stipulating that his name should not be mentioned. How many owed to Dick release from the sordid and hopeless conditions of city slums, and the opening of a happy and prosperous life overseas, will never be known—nor yet the countless acts of timely help to others of a different class, but one letter, preserved by chance, throws a light on the charity that he kept secret.

Australian Camp, near Weymouth, June, 1916.

Dear Sir.—Having at last found out the name of my benefactor, I am going to do my best to thank you. But, dear Sir, words spoken or penned cannot express my gratitude. Through your great kindness in paying my expenses to Australia, my whole life was altered, and I was given the chance that I had been longing for. . . . I did very well, but when the call sounded I joined up in Brisbane. . . . My battalion landed first in Gallipoli, and I was wounded a few hours after landing (permanently I am afraid). Still thanks to you I was able to do my bit. . . . I called on Father Preedy in London, 'twas he gave me your name and address. And, believing you would be interested in my story, he told me to write. . . . Thanking you once more from my heart,

I remain, your Servant,———

P.S.—I may add, Sir, one more boon which has been added to my life, a wife who I could never have thought of but for going to Australia.

¶While his regiment was at Windsor, Dick was within a short motor drive of home, and constantly came back there, usually bringing guests with him. Regimental duty in those days was comparatively light, but in the essential quality of handling men Dick's

value as an officer was generally recognised, and as a good shot and first-rate horseman he stood above the average. He passed the qualifying examination for promotion in June, 1912, and wrote of this immediately to his mother:

Cavalry Barracks, Windsor, 25th June, 1912.

. . . A line to tell you that I heard from the War Office this morning, telling me that I had passed my exam. I got 783 marks out of 1,000, so did quite well.

¶ They were so much together that summer that letters are few. His mother's diary contains notes of going to Windsor to see the procession of Knights of the Garter and cricket matches between the 1st Life Guards and the Blues—of going to see Dick ride at Olympia, on which occasion his charger took second prize, as well as of constant, gay little week-end parties at Benham.

¶ Early in July Dick broke his leg in an accident at Windsor, and came home to be nursed. It was not a very bad business, however, and within a fortnight he was allowed out in a wheel-chair in the garden, and a few weeks later was about again. The family went out as usual to Varenna about the end of August, and Dick arranged to follow them as soon as he was able to go.

Cavalry Barracks, Windsor, 1st Sept.

. . . I think the 19th will be the date I shall get away, as manoeuvres finish that date, so I fear I shall miss the kids and Father C. I have got to be back the 1st Dec. for squadron training, a new idea of the War Office. As the regiment have been doing 5 field days a week since the first of April I think they might let us have a bit of peace in the winter. The contract squadron go on manoeuvres on Tuesday. I have got to act adjutant while they are away. I am going to Benham on Monday night until Wednesday morning, to shoot some partridge on Tuesday and have a cub hunt on Wednesday (the 1st meet) at the laundry, Benham. Jim, Uncle R., Geoffrey Barclay, Tom and Nipper are coming. I went over to Kimble the other day and had tea with Donny* and ascended Beacon Hill; it is not very far from here. My leg is ever so much better again now. Did you see in the paper two days ago that Delaval† flew from London to Paris with a passenger. . . .

Cavalry Barracks, Windsor, 18th Sept. 1912.

. . . Manoeuvres finish to-morrow and I leave here Friday, as the real adjutant will come back to-morrow night and take over. T. and Gwen are, I think, coming with me. They were to have gone on Thursday viâ Dieppe and Milan. But I think they will now come with me. . . . I got away from here from Friday

* Donny was R.V.S.'s name for Miss Steward, an old lady living near Chequers.

† Delaval was Mr. Hubert Astley's nephew, Mr. H. J. D. Astley, of Chequers Court, Bucks, one of the first pioneers of the new art of flying. He was killed in the fall of his machine at Belfast three days after the above letter was written.

until Monday. . . went cubbing last Monday, we met at the Ash House and drew Heycroft, Elcot, etc., lots of foxes but no scent. I went down to Eton this afternoon and had tea with Miss Trew, who seems in good form. New boys pouring into Eton, every shop was full of them, and I finally fled as some mothers appeared to see Miss Trew. Long leave I see is on the 9th November and the term ends on 19th Dec., rather earlier than usual, I think. I expect you would have some difficulty to get it from Pippin, so I looked. . . .

¶ Dick joined the party at the Villa dei Cipressi on the 22nd, spending a month sailing on the lake, and playing golf at Menaggio, the whole party returning together to Benham Valence, where the pleasant round of shooting and hunting again set in, the opening meet of the Craven hounds being held at the house. Dick hunted regularly with the three packs of the neighbourhood, the Craven, V.W.H. and the Old Berks, and brief journal notes remain of good days' sport, four or five days a week, and of a shoot in the Benham coverts in November, when, with his own and five other guns, the bag was over 400 pheasants though the day was cut short by bad weather. *À propos* of shooting, it may be remembered that Dick could never bring himself to fire at a hare lest it should not be killed outright. There were country house visits, too, that autumn, for sport or for balls; Dick, who was by now a very good dancer, found both delightful. He went back to regimental duty on the first of December, but was at home again for Christmas, when there was another large gathering at Benham, and a dance on New Year's Day. At the end of January, 1913, Lady Corbet, "Auntie Nee" of Dick's letters, was married to Mr. Reginald Astley, brother of Dick's step-father. Dick was best man at the wedding, at which his cousin, Sir Roland Corbet, gave his mother away.

¶ Dick was now nearly twenty-two, and though, like all his race, he abhorred party politics, he had every intention of taking his share of public responsibilities, and found time to attend political gatherings in the country, and to meet in London men of weight, among whom he could form his own judgment. He never wrote of these matters, but discussed them with his intimate friends, and waited for time to prove his sphere of service. Meanwhile the affairs of his own property took up much of his thought and attention; Dick desired so keenly that all should be done for the best, and began to look into things for himself. But whatever he found, he never acted precipitately; he had a strong sense of justice and love

of fair play. He would give anyone the benefit of a doubt, and was extraordinarily forgiving of wrongs towards himself: in no instance did he exact the full penalty for these, though he was stirred to anger when others suffered unfairly. He was perhaps over generous to those who had served him ill, but on the other hand, his warm appreciation of those who were loyal to him, and his affection for them inspired lasting devotion towards himself.

¶ The easy pleasures pressed upon him from all sides might have spoilt a weaker nature, but Dick's unselfishness was incorruptible, and his thoughtful courtesy unfailing. Two letters may be given here, though written later, the first from Miss Wyatt, who had stayed at Benham to give Mr. Astley sketching lessons, the second from a teacher of Italian in London:

. . . I only met him that once that I stayed at Benham, but the memory I have of him always in my mind is charming. One of a walk to early service with his old governess and myself, and the other of our journey to Paddington together, when he pretended that he preferred to travel 3rd to keep an elderly uninteresting person like myself company . . . and then insisted on dropping me in his cab as he said it was on his way to Barracks!

¶ The old Italian writes at length of illness and trouble that befell him in London, and of Dick's generous help, especially in the trouble he took to obtain pupils for him. Dick himself had some further lessons from him, employing the hours when he was detained at Whitehall on King's Guard in the study of the language. Signor K. writes:

. . . So good and noble he befriended his poor humble teacher, and never as long as I live I shall ever forget his gentle ways, and the pleasant interviews I had with him. . . . I ever keep him warm in my heart and thoughts. . . .

¶ Dick always had time for kindness, in his busiest or gayest days. And to his own people his letters keep the boyish simplicity of school time.

¶ To his Mother in Italy: 19th May, 1913.

My darling Mum.—I am afraid I have not written to you very often, but there is not a very great deal of news. I could only get leave from Friday night till Tuesday morning at Whitsuntide, so it was not worth going to Scilly, especially as the *Lyonesse* ran most inconveniently, and I should have had to spend about 5 hours at Penzance each way. Isn't it perfectly splendid about Bos?* We went over some of the rooms in old Birch's house two days ago, it is

*Mr. T. Boscawen had just been appointed Agent for the Bank of England, Western Branch, in succession to Sir J. Birch. The house is 1 Old Burlington Street.

really quite a magnificent house, it seems too good to be true. We have had several practices for this review on 16th June, it will be a fine sight the three regiments together, and I see the King is going to make a State visit to Eton in the afternoon in his barge, and will be escorted by the Eton boats in their 4th of June clothes, so Pippin will be participating in that. You will really have to come over for the double event. I am having my room in Barracks very nicely done up; I am at present lucky enough to have two, as John Cavendish gave me one of his, as he lives with his mother in Carlos Place. So I shall have a bedroom and a sitting room. If I am in London on 29th I will give you tea. I may possibly be down at Benham for the afternoon, if the May Fly are on then. We are having lovely weather now, but have only had one game of polo so far as it has been so wet. Please give my best love to Pam. Your ever loving Dick.

P.S.—Looking forward to seeing you again awfully.

¶His mother and step-father naturally did come home for "the double event," and Dick was able to meet them in London, and go down with them to Benham, where a succession of visitors followed to fish, among them the two Boscawens, Frank Manners-Sutton, Sir Richard Levinge (another first cousin) with his wife, and a week later Dick had a house-party for Newbury Races. On 14th June Dick attended a State Dinner at Windsor, and on the 16th the review of the Household Cavalry took place, and the Royal visit to Eton—a splendid sight indeed. It was "King's weather" that June, and for the next few weeks dinner was served as Dick loved to have it, in the garden—the remembrance of those happy summer evenings in such surroundings remained as a dream of another existence, to many who were guests then, in the dark days of war. The alterations at Brinsop were being carried out, and there were many expeditions for the day, starting early and getting back late, to watch the progress of the work; Dick searching for old oak panelling to beautify the rooms there, finding many treasures. Later Dick went off for the summer manoeuvres, and writes in pencil from camp on 8th September:

... We arrived here, about 6 miles from Warwick, yesterday. We had a very pleasant march down. This is a lovely place on a hillside with a lovely view. We shall be here till next Saturday on which day we march to Daventry for Brigade training. We are going to have a day off on Wednesday, and the Warwickshire hounds are going to meet here, so we shall get a day's cubbing. Did you catch a fox, by the way, either day last week? I went to Kenilworth Castle this afternoon, it is a *most* lovely old ruin. Lady Ebury was most kind to us at Moor Park, she showed me her dogs, she has one puppy she thinks is going to be a champion.... "Cooncan" is going splendidly and will be in fine condition for you in October....

¶At the end of September Dick took the Richard Levinges out to the Villa dei Cipressi (which was now his own, his mother and step-father having made it over to him when he gave them Brinsop Court). He writes from there on various dates in the next few weeks to his mother:

30th Sept. 1913.

... We arrived here quite safely yesterday. The weather, I am sorry to say, was overcast and rather cold.... The house looks awfully nice, and I am busy hanging up the pictures from Benham which arrived last week. The servants are delighted with their presents, and inquired a great deal after you and Father. Dick and Irene are quite enchanted with everything, but I am sorry they should see the Lake at its worst for the first time. The aeroplane race is on 5th October so we are in time for it.... It did not matter about that telegram to return at once last Monday, as C. was seized to take my troop out, poor creature, and was out 13 hours without seeing a sign of the enemy.... I wish you were with us....

5th October.

... It is splendid Pippin having got into Army Class I, he wrote and told me about it. What day do you think of moving? If fairly soon it would be very nice to have the book room done up, and it would be very nice of you if you would choose a paper for it. I daresay Gilbert would do it quite well. If you don't move till the end of the month, I should think we had better leave it as the smell of the paint might be rather strong. Fancy about that picture which Brookie might have bought. I was the first person who Buttery showed it to after it had been cleaned, he offered it to me for £80,000 and told me he had bought it very cheap at a sale and that the excitement of cleaning it was quite intense. It is a lovely picture, and will go, I suppose, to America. It is a pity you did not get it for £15. Had he wanted 8 instead of 80 thousand, I should have been almost tempted to buy it. The weather is too horrible, clouds right down on the mountains and pouring with rain. We have only had one fine day. Irene however is very cheerful and does not seem to mind; I am so sorry they should see the Lake at its worst. Brookie, Harry Mylius and Harry Hoare are coming over from the Olivetta to lunch to-day. Corbould left yesterday. Desmond Fitzgerald arrives on the 12th by which time I hope the weather may have got better. The hydro-aeroplane race starts to-morrow and passes by here about 9 o'clock. We signed the contract of purchase on Friday and I paid £320 duty to Government which seems rather a waste. Please give my best love to Pam. I miss you so much.

¶This visit to the Villa dei Cipressi was a memorably happy one. Dick was an ideal host, and in the beautiful house and garden on the lake, enchanting in the perfect weather of early autumn, the little party of intimate friends, he and Sir Richard and Lady Levinge, Lord Desmond Fitzgerald and Mr. Brooke were together for the final week of this stay in Italy. "Brookie" was an old friend

of both Dick's parents, and of his step-father, and, like Dick himself, possessed that rare gift of sympathy that makes difference of age forgotten. Dick was always felt to be a contemporary by children, older people, and those of his own age alike, and on this occasion the guests were all congenial to him and to each other. The day before they were all leaving, Dick said that it had been so perfect that the five must promise to meet at the same time and place every year. Lady Levinge, as if with a flash of second sight, said it could never be, for things so perfect never came again. Now, within a few years, she alone of that party is left; the three young men all lost their lives in the war, Mr. Brooke died in April, 1921.

18th October.

. . . I owe you a letter, if not two. How are you . . . I wish you were here. Desmond Fitzgerald and Charles Hope are here, they arrived last Monday and are enjoying themselves, I think. Tuesday and Wednesday were dull, cloudy days, but yesterday was lovely and we went for that gorgeous walk the same as last year, through the mountains and down to the Piona. It was quite lovely. Brookie and the Levinges went to Venice last Monday for a week, they return here. I went up Monte Crocione at last the other day, and had the most superb view, all the Alps, Mont Blanc, Milan and I don't know what else. . . . It is a lovely day to-day and we are going to Piona after lunch. . . . Someone has cut that little dwarf tree by the Lake steps, it is such a pity. Desmond Fitzgerald and Charles Hope both bathed before breakfast this morning, they would not believe me that the water was cold. They very soon found out, however. . . . I shall get home on Sunday, 2nd November, unless the weather gets beastly, in which case I might get home a little sooner. I am shooting partridges at Benham on 5th, 6th, and 7th November. . . .

Dick wrote again as the time drew near for his mother's departure:

My dearest old Mum.—I am thinking of you a great deal to-day moving into Brinsop. I do hope and trust you may be very happy there. . . . I can't tell you how I loathe your leaving Benham and how terribly I shall miss you. You will leave a gap that nothing and nobody can ever fill. I can only hope that you will come there long and often in the future. . . . If I see as much of you as I hope to, it will be all right in the end, and no one shall spoil our happiness when we are together. You know how enormously I shall look forward to your coming. Your room shall always be ready for you. I am longing to be home with you. . . . Ever your most loving Dick.

Dick returned as he had planned on 2nd November, and the opening meet of the Craven took place next morning at Benham, Dick and his mother went out. Mr. Astley had already gone on to Brinsop, and Lady Sutton joined him on the 6th in their new home,

where Dick spent Christmas with them and his brother and sister. Writing on his return to Benham Valence on the 29th, he says:

I loved being with you all, I think your new home is lovely and am longing to see it in the spring. . . .

Dick was anxious to have a portrait of his mother painted by the famous Hungarian artist Lazlö, but through a series of accidents the sittings were delayed, and in the end the picture was never painted. He writes on the subject in March:

Hyde Park Barracks, 6th March, 1914.

. . . A line to tell you that I won the Regimental Point-to-Point yesterday by two fields. I had an armchair ride and I don't believe "Gold Coin" touched a twig in any one fence, although some of them were very big ones. Lazlö returns to London on the 12th so could paint you any time after that I suppose. I am on guard on Sunday, I haven't been away from here for one Sunday for 6 weeks, or any other time except for the day. I long to see you. . . .

21st March, 1914.

. . . I have heard from Lazlö, who has gone to Greece to paint the Greek Royal family. He is returning at the end of April. It would suit you better to postpone being painted till the autumn, wouldn't it? but it would be a good thing, wouldn't it, to have an interview with him and discuss the matter finally, when he comes back to London. If you are coming to London for a few days don't come between Friday and Tuesday next, as I should see very little of you those days. The one topic of conversation here is, of course, Ulster, and whether to send in one's resignation or not. I believe the whole of the Officers of the 5th Lancers have resigned except two. This information comes from Caledon's brother, who is in the Regiment. I should think there must be a General Election almost at once. But I don't see it would be much good, as it is more than likely the Radicals would get in again. The King is by way of going to Knowsley on Tuesday, so we hoped to get off guards, but I should think he probably won't go now. I am troop training this week and next. I am also cramming for my promotion exam. which takes place on 20th April, so I am very bussy *(sic)*. I had a very nice ride in the Army Pt.-to-Pt. but ought to have won it, but I got a very bad start, and lost nearly half a field through it which was sickening. . . .

Dick spent a quiet Easter with his family at Brinsop, and saw the glory of the wild daffodils in flower in the Herefordshire woods for the first and last time. Lady Sutton and Mr. Astley did not go to Italy that year, and they and Dick were constantly together. Dick was carrying out various improvements at Benham Valence, and these, as well as regimental work, which had become more exacting, kept his time fully occupied, while the clouds on the political horizon thickened and at last the storm of war broke on the Continent at the end of July.

¶Lady Sutton and Mr. Astley were going to Norfolk on the 31st, and Dick had arranged to meet them on their way through London, but was detained at the Barracks, and sent a note by hand:

. . . No one is allowed to leave Barracks till 1 o'clock on account of this crisis and everyone has to sleep here, all leave having been stopped. . . . I am sorry to say I have to go down to Benham by the 1.45 for the school treat. . . . What day do you come back from Melton, I must see you then. All love. Dick.

¶Dick wrote again a day or two later:

Hyde Park Barracks, 1st Aug. 1914.

. . . Although the papers are very black the situation here is considered rather more hopeful as far as England is concerned at any rate. Germany and Russia are thought to be going to fight for a certainty almost. I do not go out in the Service Squadron by one place of seniority. It takes 5 subalterns and I am 6th. I should go about a month later with the second squadron, which will be made up from the ones left and the reserves. . . . Italy has declared her neutrality, which is rather a blessing. I am so much looking forward to seeing you all on Wednesday, I hope something may be settled by then. The school treat went off very well and much as usual. The house really is on the point of getting straight bar the dining room and drawing room of course. . . .

¶The situation had become so serious, however, by Monday that Mr. Astley and Lady Sutton decided to return to London, and by Tuesday midnight came the declaration of war.

¶The Household Brigade was among the first troops to go abroad, and preparations were being pushed on without ceasing. Dick's next letter follows:

Hyde Park Barracks, 13th August, 1914.

. . . We have still heard nothing except that the Service Squadron is to leave this week. Probably Friday we think. The Foot Guards left yesterday morning. It will probably be a good long time before we are ready to go even, as we have only been able to get 150 horses and our war strength is 450. We are leading a wretched existence, parades at 6.30, 9.45, 11.0 a.m. and 2.0 p.m. this I suppose will go on till we go. If only we can win the first great battle, I do not think the war can possibly last long. If the Germans start winning it will go on for ever I should think, or at least until they are beaten. Pippin must have done very well indeed at Sandhurst to be 35th. I am so glad. I have seen our Bossy several times who seems to look quite on the bright side. . . .

20th Aug. 1914.

. . . Not very much fresh news, things go on much the same, *i.e.* endless drills till 5.30 every day. We have got most of our horses now, but have heard nothing about going out, which I don't think will be for some weeks yet. As soon as I hear anything I will of course let you know at once, and Aunt Florence has said she wants to put you up here for a bit. I should think probably in

about a fortnight's time would be best perhaps. I should have more time off then, as our horses will be rather more trained. I went to Benham on Sunday as at the last moment I managed to get away to collect saddles which we are badly in need of as the Army ordnance department have not issued ours yet. I managed to collect 30, ten from Scarlett, 8 from Fairhurst, 8 from Nipper and Tom, 4 from Tubbs, so I did well. I had no time to let you know, and had to spend most of the day motoring after these saddles. I am afraid next Sunday I shall not be able to find a reason to get away. Sundays and week are much the same now as regards work, so far as I can see. I understand our army abroad have not come into action yet, and will not until both French and Germans are exhausted after the battle which has just started. Please thank Pam for his letter and tell him I will write to him. . . .

29th Aug. 1914.

. . . I haven't very much news except that we are probably going into camp at Churn (about 9 miles from Benham) next week so if you can come to Benham I shall hope to see something of you, which I should love. We have no more news about what date we go to the front, but we should probably have to train for about a fortnight after getting into camp before going. We are working at very high pressure still, and even had mounted drill on Sunday. I fear it seems as if our Army is having to bear the brunt of the main German attack rather indifferently supported by the French. . . .

¶ His mother and sister and step-father went to Benham Valence immediately, and from 3rd to 29th September, while at Windmill Hill Camp, Ludgershall, Dick was able to be with them for an hour or two most evenings, often bringing his closest friend in the Regiment, Lord Althorp, with him, or his cousin, Sir Richard Levinge, whose wife joined the party at Benham, as did also the Reginald Astleys, Vere Boscawen and his brother, and occasionally Philip came over from Sandhurst. "Tibbie," now established in a charming little house on the estate furnished for her by Dick (Speen Holt), was often there too. Jim Corbet, lying wounded in hospital in London, could not be there, but was visited by most of the party in turn. September passed like a dream, and on 5th October Dick left Windmill Hill Camp for France at 12 hours' notice.

¶ He wrote in the very early hours of that morning to his mother:

My darling Mother.—I can't tell you how distressed I am at not seeing you to say good-bye. We had sudden orders yesterday to stand by to go first thing next morning. The first train leaves at 4.30 and we go in 12 trains. We have no idea, of course, exactly where we are going and are not allowed to open the sealed orders until we are at sea. I think I have everything quite ready. My address will be "Reserve Regiment, 1st Life Guards, 7th Cavalry Brigade, 3rd Cavalry Division. British Expeditionary Force. On Active Service." I feel I shall

get on all right, but if anything happens to me please send wires to my friends... as soon as the War Office let you know. We are just ordered to parade. Great haste. All love to you both. Dick.

¶From Southampton Dick wrote to his step-father:

My dearest Pam.—We got here last night but did not embark. We came into a camp just outside the town, and go on board at midday. Apparently they had not enough transports to embark us all yesterday. Of course we have no idea where we are going—Havre I should think. We have had to leave quite a lot of men behind who were on week-end leave, as we were only given a few hours' notice. There are five Cavalry Regiments, 1st and 2nd Blues, 10th Hussars, Royal Dragoon Guards going from here, and an Infantry Division of 20,000 men with artillery, I hope that and the Indian Army may be a surprise packet for the Germans. All love to Mother, your ever loving Dick.

ACTIVE SERVICE IN FRANCE AND FLANDERS, OCTOBER 1914 TO AUGUST 1915; AND STAFF DUTY WITH FOURTH ARMY CORPS, AUGUST 1915 TO DECEMBER 1915.

THE story of the next three weeks can best be told by extracts from Dick's own Diary, and the War Diary of the 1st Life Guards.

¶From Private Diary of R.V.S.:

October 8. We arrived about 5.30 but took a long time to get alongside the pier. After making fast we were not allowed to start disembarking until 8.30. Zeebrugge, which is where we had come, is about 12 miles east of Ostend. It has a very fine mole over a mile long, and there was room for 5 transports to unload at once.* It took us several hours to unload; and when we had finished we stood by for orders. We did not move off till 4.30. There were no signs of the rest of our Regiment.† Two squadrons of the 2nd Life Guards and our own headquarters are with us. We marched along the road due west by the side of the sea into the seaside town of Blankenberghe. The inhabitants cheered us and could not do enough for us. ‡The men were plied with chocolates, cake and beer whenever we halted for a moment, which we did frequently, as the Colonels had not received orders where to go. We finally bivouacked just outside the town beside the sea. It was cold and damp and I had to get up several times to walk about to get warm.

* Transports were kept ready at Zeebrugge to re-embark the troops, as it was considered probable at the time that our Army might be driven back to the sea.

† The rest of the Regiment disembarked at Ostend, rejoining Headquarters the next day.

‡ The Regimental War Diary notes of this day:—"The column was considerably delayed in the streets of the town owing to non-receipt of orders. This was unfortunate as it led to the ranks being considerably broken by inhabitants offering hospitality. It seems undesirable for troops to be halted in friendly towns."

October 9. We marched at 8 o'clock to Bruges. Althorp and Dick Levinge had been sent out previously at 6 o'clock on officers' patrols in that direction. My troop formed the advance guard. We arrived at Bruges without any event. It is a very charming old town. We did not stay there, but marched along the Ostend road and remained in a village about 6 miles from Bruges most of the day. While we were there a lot of refugees from Antwerp came through, also cyclists and artillery. We went into billets at Lophem, a small village 3 miles from Bruges. Our squadron was allotted a small farm, and the horses were put in the orchard. The men slept out, and we had the parlour of the house. We had a fire and were able to cook a hot meal and buy eggs, etc.

October 10. I was sent out with 4 men on an Officer's patrol to reconnoitre Ruddervoorde, a village about 5 miles south of Lophem. I could get no news of the enemy. At 12 noon we had orders to march to Beernem, 8 miles S.E. of Bruges. On our way we met about 8 batteries of Belgian artillery retreating from Antwerp to Ostend. We picked up the rest of our Brigade at Beernem (Blues and 2nd Life Guards). The Brigade with our Batteries of R.H.A. then marched to Ruddervoorde to billet there, but found it was occupied by Belgians. So we turned south and bivouacked in a wood about 2 miles south of the village; in the grounds of a large country house. It was not cold and we slept very comfortably under the pine trees as it was very dry.

October 11. I relieved Dick Levinge, who was on an outpost, at 5 a.m., and remained on duty with my troop for two hours. We received orders to be ready to move off at 12, and remained saddled till 4 o'clock, and having no further orders spent the night there. Very cold.

October 12. We marched at 8 a.m. Everybody was much excited: it was considered certain we should meet patrols of the enemy—however we did not do so. We marched through Iseghem, a fair-sized town about 12 miles south of where we bivouacked last night. All the inhabitants turned out to see us pass, giving us chocolate and cigars. They told us that some Uhlans were in the neighbourhood of the town, upon which we made a search in the immediate neighbourhood but without result. D Squadron (in which I am) was ordered to take up a defensive line near Lendelede. My troop was assigned a front of about ¾ mile, in the centre of which there was a small farm. We were comfortably settled, but just as it was getting dark we received orders that the Regiment was to concentrate at Rumbeke, about 4 miles north. The Regiment bivouacked on the race-course. We were given supper by the priest and slept on the floor of the village school.

October 13. We marched at 5 a.m. to Ypres, with the whole of the Cavalry Division, a distance of about 12 miles. A German Taube aeroplane flew over the Blues, at which they fired without success. We were marching to join up with the British Army, which was said to be the other side of Ypres, but on arriving near that town, we received information that there was a German force ahead of us, so we turned south along the Menin road until we reached Gheluwe, where our advance guard, who had pushed forward to Menin, reported that

it was occupied by about 1,000 Germans. *As it was now getting dark, the Brigadier-General C. M. Kavanagh, C.V.O., C.B., D.S.O., considered it was too late to attack, and ordered the Brigade to withdraw to Iseghem, via Winckel-St. Eloi. We had gone about 2 miles, when in the dim light we saw a force of cavalry ahead of us. The roads were unfenced, and the regiment formed line to charge, and drew swords, when we discovered the supposed enemy was a Squadron of the Royal Dragoons, part of our own Division, which had been marching parallel with us. My troop formed the advance guard, and I found it very hard to make out the way, as it was pouring with rain and very dark—however I managed to do so, and we arrived at Iseghem about 9 p.m. and went into billets. D Squadron was allotted a timber yard, and the officers were entertained by the occupants of an adjoining house, who gave us supper and a bed apiece. We received information that there was a German Army Corps at Thielt, about 6 miles N.E., and another force of considerable size at Courtrai, 5 miles S.—consequently we only had 2 hours in bed, from 11 p.m. to 1 a.m., when we received orders that the Brigade was to march at once and if possible effect a junction with the British Main Army.

October 14. We marched at 1 a.m. If we don't succeed in joining the Main Army we shall probably be surrounded. We marched to Ypres via Winckel-St. Eloi. The 7th Infantry Division was marching to Ypres on a parallel road. We luckily were not opposed by the enemy and reached Ypres at 11 o'clock and halted there an hour for the 7th Division to come up. When we had been in the town about 15 minutes a German aeroplane came over at about 1,000 feet. The rifle fire of the whole Brigade was directed at it, and also from some Naval armoured cars in the Market Place. The machine was hit, and was obliged to descend just outside the town and both airmen were captured. We left Ypres at midday and went about 4 miles on the road to Kemmel, and here got into touch with the cavalry of the Main Army. Heavy firing was heard between us and Lille which was said to be Smith-Dorrien's Corps, which had been hurriedly brought up from the Aisne. We went into billets.

October 15. We saddled up at 6 a.m. but received no orders, and so remained in these billets all day. The rest did the horses a lot of good.

Dick was able on this day to write home:

Thursday, 15th October.

My dearest Mother.—We are now in touch with the enemy, but my squadron has not fired a shot yet. We have got about 12 Uhlans so far and have lost one Corporal of horse shot through the head with a revolver. The German who did it was killed with a sword a second later. The first thing of excitement was when we were halted in the market place of a town a German aeroplane came over. Everyone fired, including some maxims, and to our huge delight brought it down. There were two men in it, one broke his shoulder, and the other his

* The real reason for this retirement we now know was that Headquarters 3rd Cavalry Division at Iseghem heard of German force at Thielt. They therefore recalled 7th Cavalry Brigade to protect Iseghem from this force.

leg. They were able to descend slowly and so escaped death. One of my horses is very lame and so I have to have my things in the waggon instead, which is a bore. We have slept out about two nights, but usually get into some farms at night and sleep on straw in barns. I have shaved and brushed my teeth this morning but have not had a bath since we left, of course. The weather is bad now, and one's feet are always wet, but it seems to agree with one, as I have never felt better. We are about 5 miles from the main infantry battle and it is like one thunderstorm after another to hear. It appears that the German cavalry don't seem inclined to take our cavalry on at all. I don't know what the papers are saying, but I can promise you the situation is very good indeed. One only seldom gets an opportunity of writing, and of course, is allowed to tell nothing, but if you think this letter would interest any of my friends you might send it on. Best love to you both, Dick.

October 16. We started at 7 a.m. and marched through Ypres to Poelcapelle; here we took up a position but were not attacked. The forest of Houthulst was reported to be held by the enemy. Two squadrons were sent to find out, but only came across about 150 Uhlans, who retired at sight. C Squadron lost a man on an Officer's patrol, who was sniped from a house. We were withdrawn at 7 p.m., under cover of darkness, to Paschendaele. The whole Brigade and our R.H.A. battery and all the transport arrived at the same moment from different directions and a good deal of muddle ensued in the darkness. We had quite a good billet, but the horses had to stand in lines in the street, and so did not get much rest.

October 17. My squadron (D) was ordered to take up part of the outpost position about ¾ mile N.E. of the town and we moved out to do so at 6 a.m. and entrenched ourselves (the 1st Lifeguards are forming the outposts for the Brigade). There is a good deal of artillery fire going on about 5 miles off, especially from the north. My troop had a small farm as headquarters where we were able to get bread and eggs, and hay for the horses. We remained there all day without any event. We had double sentries in the trenches all night, as we expected to be attacked, but were not.

October 18. We moved at 6 a.m. as a reconnoitring squadron with orders to go up to the crossing of the Roulers-Dixmude road, and if possible to hold this crossing. We arrived there in about 45 minutes. Found no signs of the enemy, although we heard from civilians that a considerable force had passed along that road the day before. A squadron of French Cuirassiers turned up about 12.30 and during the afternoon two French batteries of 75 cms. arrived and told us that the French intended to attack Roulers next day. We received orders to rejoin the Brigade in bivouac just north of Moorslede. Here we were most uncomfortable and had to sleep out without sleeping kit as the transport did not arrive. During the day the Brigade killed or captured about 40 Uhlans.

October 19. We marched at 5.30 through Moorslede with orders to operate on the left of the 7th Division, who were to attack Menin. At the junction of the Menin-Roulers road, however, we came suddenly and unexpectedly on to

a German column advancing towards Paschendaele. Our Brigade maxims opened fire on the head of the column. The Germans continued to advance, and we were ordered to take up a defensive line and delay their advance as much as possible. The Germans opened a very hot fire on us, both rifles and machine guns, but were not able to get their artillery into action. Our R.H.A. battery, however, shelled them. We remained under our position, lining hedges or any natural cover we could find and the Germans did not advance, but kept up a very heavy fire. Stone, in my troop, was killed about four yards from me. The Germans finally got several batteries into action, and in consequence we were ordered to retire about a mile, where another defensive position was taken up with a view to delaying the enemy's advance as much as possible to allow our infantry, which was being rushed up by train and motor bus from the Aisne, to arrive and stop the German advance on Calais and the coast. Behind us at Paschendaele there was a considerable force of French territorial troops, who were engaged in entrenching that ridge. The Germans brought up their artillery to the place we had just left, but as we were well concealed it was some time before they made it necessary for us to retire again. When we retired it was to the Moorslede ridge. All the roads were black with fugitives of all ages, driving, walking, running. Some packed 18 to 20 in one cart, others carrying bundles containing all their worldly goods, women carrying babies. Shells and bullets were being fired over them at our position and occasionally some unfortunate fugitive was hit. When it got dark we withdrew through Paschendaele to Zonnebeke for the night. Our billet was a bad one; the house that fell to our lot was crowded with fugitives, men, women and children; there was no food of any sort, except our rations, and the unfortunates were most grateful for our remains. The men and horses were very crowded, two regiments being pegged down in one muddy field, and it rained all night, which did not add to the comfort of the men.

October 20. We left in the dark at 5 a.m. to assist the French Territorials to hold Paschendaele: we arrived in about half an hour and found a large force of French and three batteries of artillery. We commenced to dig ourselves support trenches. We were not attacked until 12.30, when Paschendaele was shelled. The situation was in no way critical, but the French on our left retired, exposing our flank. We remained there 20 minutes after the French retirement; we then had to retire also to avoid being surrounded, as the Germans had entered the left side of the village. While we were there I was sent twice by Brassey to find out the movements of the French, and in doing so had the most interesting view of this engagement. It was amusing to see the French Cuirassiers dressed as at Waterloo in full uniform and helmets with plumes. There were some thousands of French troops, who seemed to have very few officers or would have no doubt done better. After our retirement we took up a position about 3 miles to our rear, with orders to hold it until relieved by the 4th Guards Brigade. Our 7th Division at Zonnebeke was being heavily attacked. There were two batteries of our artillery about a mile to our right who were firing continually, and were being vigorously shelled by the Germans. It was a very fine sight after

dark, like splendid fireworks. We were anxious for the fate of our transport which we had left at Zonnebeke in the morning. At 9 p.m. the Foot Guards came up, and we withdrew through them to billets. Our transport had survived and we found it.

October 21. As soon as it was light we were sent to Zonnebeke to support the 7th Infantry Division, which was being very heavily attacked. When we got there some of the infantry were leaving their trenches in spite of the efforts of their officers to prevent them. They lost rather heavily in this. We took up our position in the support trenches and prevented any further retirement. Two batteries of 18-pounders were behind us in the valley, and were doing great execution among the enemy, who were advancing across the plough fields 1,200 yards away. We could see our shells bursting splendidly about 20 feet above the heads of the German infantry which finally was obliged to retire, leaving many dead behind them, who could be seen in great patches over the fields where our shells had been bursting. While we were in the reserve trenches (which were hardly worthy of the name) a very unpleasant incident happened. The right-hand gun of our battery fired low every third or fourth shot, and the shell, instead of passing over our heads, hit the ground at the summit of the hill only 10 yards behind my troop. The first time it occurred we were covered with lumps of earth, but no one was hurt. The situation was most unpleasant, as I could not retire without orders. Three shots later it occurred again and the fragment of the shell hit Corporal Tapsell, my troop Corporal, who was about two yards from me, and inflicted a terrible wound upon him. The Commanding Officer signalled back what had happened to the gunners, who did not use that particular gun again. After the Germans had retired we were relieved by the 3rd Coldstreams and went back into billets at St. Eloi, west of Ypres.

October 22. We moved on to the Ypres-Menin road at 6 a.m. and were halted near Hooge. Our infantry are holding the enemy's advance from Menin. We remained at Hooge in the grounds of a château all day in reserve, but did not come into action. We spent most of the afternoon comfortably in the château. Clowes and I searched the cellar in the hopes of finding some port wine, but the Belgian Baron to whom the house belonged had removed his wine when he fled. Jack Althorp found a hip bath, which he made use of in the back passage of the house. We all did some washing. The grounds of the château were very nice and there was a small lake on which were any number of toy boats left drifting about (I have since heard that this nice house has been made a pile of ruins). There was a battery of 4.7 heavy guns just outside the garden and I walked over to them and watched them shooting, which was most interesting, their target was 5 miles away. A German heavy battery was trying all day to discover their position, and it was amusing to see the enemy's shells try every position of the ground, but always just missed the position of our guns. At 5 p.m. we had orders to go to Klein Zillebeke as a reserve to the trenches there. Shells were bursting over all the roads. We lay out in a field all night, without our transport arriving, and in consequence we did not get our sleeping bags or blankets. It was too cold to sleep much without and there was a frightful dew, so we were

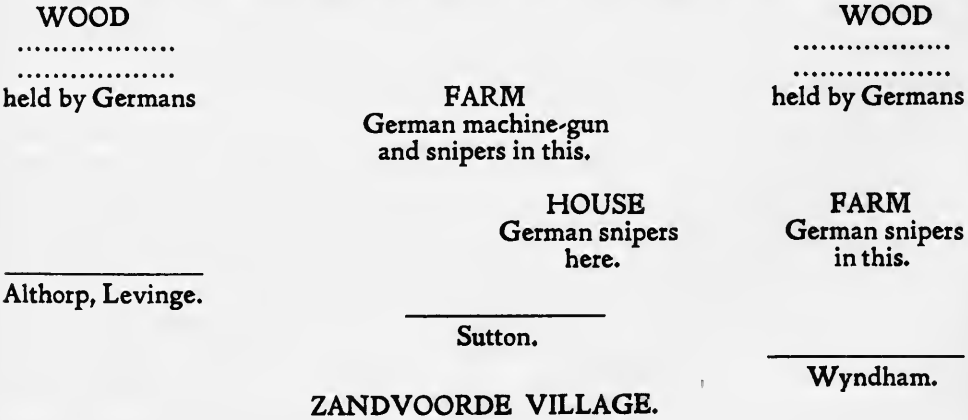
all wet through in the morning. Between 9 and 10 we heard tremendous rifle and machine-gun fire from the trenches only ¾ mile away.

¶ This breathing-space offered another chance of writing home:

22nd Oct. 1914.

My dearest Mother.—I am very well, in fact, have never felt better. We have been fighting hard for three days and apparently getting the best of it. We start at 4 a.m. and go on till 7 or 8 at night, and then have to peg down our horses, which takes a long time, and then go straight to sleep. We have been in a tight place once but the regiment was lucky. The second L.G. had a bad time, and lost four officers. Duff was shot from a window by an Uhlan about 9 days ago. So they have had four killed and one wounded. We are with crowds of French. . . . I have only had one post from England since I came out, when I got both yours and Pam's letters. Please thank him and tell him I will write to him. We are in a battle at this moment, hidden in a wood till we are wanted, which it looks as if we might not be, our artillery seem to be getting at them. . . . We had a comfortable night last night as we were relieved in the fighting line by the 3rd Coldstreams.

October 23. At about 7 a.m. we were sent to relieve the 10th Hussars in the Zandvoorde trenches, but the trenches were being so heavily shelled that it was found impossible to relieve them until dark. We were under shell fire for some time, and our Brigadier-General (Kavanagh) had a lucky escape, as a shell burst close to him, one bullet going through his coat, and another hit Col. Brassey, who was with him, in the ear, but not severely enough to make him go sick. We were taken back two miles to wait for darkness. We were out of shell fire, and had our midday meal in comfort, and also got a post from home. It was a lovely hot afternoon like summer. As soon as it became dark enough we returned to Zandvoorde and relieved the regiment holding the trenches. This was rather an unpleasant job, as some of the farms were on fire and this lit up the ground a good deal. Major Stanley took Jack Althorp's and Dick Levinge's troop into the left hand trenches, my troop in the centre and Reggie Wyndham's on my right. To the right of him were the Blues: on our left were the Gordon Highlanders.



After we had been in the trenches half an hour I saw in the darkness about 20 men approaching the trenches from in front. My corporal was in favour of firing at them at once and not taking any risk of challenging. Luckily, however, I settled not to do this, and they turned out to be an advanced post of 10th Hussars who had been lost and left behind.

October 24. The Germans started shooting at us at 5 a.m. from the woods and houses on our front but there was no shelling. The snipers caused a good deal of nuisance. The enemy kept running from one wood to another in small parties of three and four and we tried to pick them off, sometimes with success. The Germans seem to conceal themselves very well on the whole. At 2 o'clock they commenced to shell us very violently until 4.30, almost entirely shrapnel, and they fired no high explosive shells. We all lay flat at the bottom of the trench and were very lucky, none being hit. The enemy fired 89 shells at my section of trench. At 10 p.m. they made a partial night attack, coming up within 200 yards of our trenches, and pouring in rapid fire. We expected they would rush the trenches with bayonets, but they did not push home the attack, thinking, I fancy, we were much stronger than we really were. I conjectured this, as they spent some time in the afternoon shelling the places they expected us to have our reserves.

During the attack the enemy brought up machine-guns. They also fired several shrapnel, one of which burst close to me and knocked me over, a bullet from which grazed my jaw. It bled a good deal but missed the bone. I got into touch with the other troops on my flanks and heard that poor Levinge had been killed that morning by a sniper as he was getting out of his trench.

October 25. The Germans were very quiet during the morning, but there was occasional sniping. The weather was lovely, and the aeroplanes of both sides were very busy, especially ours. The Germans fired 19 shells at one of our machines, without hitting it or even going unpleasantly close to it. We had almost got to think the Germans had retired, but at 2 o'clock they started bombarding us very heavily from several batteries, including one heavy battery. At 3 o'clock a shell burst on the traverse three feet away from me, and a piece of the shell hit me in the thigh. The bombardment lasted until nearly dark. We were relieved at 8 o'clock and I was put into an ambulance and taken to Zilleheke, and from there in a motor ambulance to Ypres.

The opening moves of the war are so familiar that the campaign in which the 1st Life Guards were now taking part is easily followed from the foregoing diary. After the German retreat from the environs of Paris early in September, the opposing armies each sought to outflank the other at the northern end of the lines, and to obtain command of the French and Belgian coasts. It was suspected that the Germans were concentrating a strong force in Belgium, and to meet this, the 3rd Cavalry and 7th Infantry Divisions were landed

at Ostend and Zeebrugge. These at first formed an independent force under Sir Henry Rawlinson, but within a day or two of landing they were put under the superior command of Sir John French, who was then bringing the original Expeditionary Force from the Aisne to Flanders. The junction of the two forces took place about Ypres on 14th October. During this progress from the coast to Ypres, Sir Henry Rawlinson's force, though often in danger from large German forces in the neighbourhood, met with no serious fighting. After the junction on 14th October Sir John French ordered General Rawlinson to advance on Menin. This advance led to the heavy fighting on 19th-20th October, and was stopped by the enemy's superior force.

¶ Dick's wound, though not dangerous, was bad enough to invalid him home, and he was sent to England within a few days. His mother and stepfather met him in London, and were soon able to move him to Benham, and again, after a short rest, to Brinsop where he made a speedy recovery. From there he returned for the remainder of his sick leave to Benham, where visitors came and went, and he was able to enjoy some shooting, and even a day or two with the hounds before he returned to duty. A wing of the house had now been transformed into a Red Cross hospital, a party of wounded arriving just as Dick left, and in the years of war many sick and wounded soldiers had cause to bless the hospitality of Benham Valence. Dick was detained on duty in England for another three months, and was kept hard at work, for the most part in training new drafts for his regiment, but was frequently at home for week-end leave, spending Christmas once more at Benham. It was a terrible winter of anxiety, and among the losses that fell heavily on the familiar circle was that of Vere Boscawen, Dick's most intimate friend. He had first been reported "missing," and later came news of his death.

¶ Dick writes to his mother, 10th December:

> . . . I have just heard that Bunny Boscawen was killed. I feel as if I had lost a brother; he was, I think, my greatest friend, and I feel I shall never have one again I care for as much. It is terrible for poor Lord and Lady Falmouth, never were two people fonder of their children than they. I just feel at the moment that life, if one retains it, will have nothing left. I know how sorry you and Father will be to hear it. I don't feel as if I can write any more; I feel more like crying. . . .

¶Another letter follows a few days later of plans for Christmas:

. . . I had meant to write before to suggest you should come to Benham for Xmas, as it seems doubtful if I could get away for more than one night just then. But I could very probably come down several times. It will be quite convenient as regards the house, lots of rooms, including the drawing room, will be finished. I was there one night last week. I have been on duty this week-end, or had hoped to pay a flying visit to Brinsop. I wonder if there is any chance of Pippin getting off for a couple days at Christmas.* I should think perhaps there might be. I believe the wounded at Benham are not giving any trouble, and some of them will soon be well enough to go. At present they have sent no more. Wyndham Portal is leaving his Yeomanry and coming back here this week, so I suppose will go out with the next draft. How slow the war does seem, doesn't it? a month seems to make no progress at all. I saw poor Lady Falmouth yesterday, she is very brave. . . . I haven't seen poor old Bos; I know what a terrible blow Bunny's death will have been to him. There are quite a lot of Officers here of various kinds. The work is not strenuous and finishes each day at 3 o'clock. It will be very nice seeing you soon. . . .

¶Dick paid another flying visit to Brinsop about the middle of January, but had to leave before his old tutor, Mr. Blore, arrived for a visit.

Hyde Park Barracks, S.W., Sunday, 17th Jan. 1915.

. . . I wonder what Mr. Blore is thinking of Brinsop, I expect he is enchanted with it all. It has been a lovely day here, but London is always depressing on a Sunday, I think. I had one day's shooting with Gerard Leigh on Friday, but it was too cold and windy to be much fun. I am going to dine with the Falmouths this evening, Tommy Boscawen (who is in the Rifle Brigade) is home on four days' leave; oh, if only it was dear Bunny. I went digging trenches at Brasted again last Thursday. They have got miles of trenches now, all round London. Newry, Godfrey Mundy, and Clowes were in here this morning on a week's leave. They say there is no appearance of the cavalry being used again at present. I am going up to my medical board to-morrow. Jack Hay has got another month's sick leave so will not get back here until 15th Feb. Uncle Reg. and Auntie Nee are at 5 Upper Berkeley St. for his old constable work. . . .

¶Brinsop was too far from town, however, to go to in brief leisure hours, and Dick therefore persuaded his mother to be at Benham as much as possible, where he could often run down to dine and sleep, or put in a day's hunting with her. He writes on 12th February from London, after she had returned to Brinsop:

. . . I so enjoyed seeing you the last fortnight, I only wish I could have got down even oftener. . . . I have got no guests this week-end. . . . I may have to go on Church parade. . . . I am dining with Bos. to-night. . . . My Regiment came out of the trenches two days ago and I am thankful to say no Officers were hit

* Philip Astley had been gazetted to the 12th Lancers, and was now at Dublin.

and only a few men. Jim led a charge on the Germans in the La Bassée brick kiln, described in the Eye Witness's account in the paper. Jim bayoneted several Teutons himself. Their machine-gun luckily jammed and so we only lost a few men. I had a letter from Philip, but he does not seem to expect leave. . . .

¶ The family party were again together at Benham at the end of February, and just after they broke up, Dick was recalled to his regiment. This time, however, 48 hours' notice was given, and his mother and stepfather rejoined him at Benham, the former motoring to Southampton with him on the following night—March 8th. The motor broke down on the road, so that they reached Southampton only ten minutes before midnight, when the troopship was due to leave. The following pencil letter was written from Havre on March 9th:

. . . I had any amount of time last night, the boat did not leave till 3 o'clock. I wonder what time you got back, you poor dear. It was so nice of you to come to Southampton with me; I did appreciate it so. It was so nice getting a glimpse of you and father. I am so sorry you had to make such an early start from Brinsop.* There are several of the Blues, four of us, and one of the 2nd on the boat, so there was lots of company. We arrived here at 1 o'clock and leave again at 10 to-night for Rouen. They say here it takes about three days to reach the Regiment. It is very cold here, but my new coat keeps out the wind well. . . .

¶ The 1st Life Guards had spent the greater part of the winter in billets round Ebblinghem, west of Hazebrouck. Early in March they were marched forward to take part in the battle of Neuve Chapelle, should the German trench line be sufficiently broken to permit of cavalry being used. This did not come to pass, and it was during the concluding stages of the battle, when all hope of cavalry action was over, that Dick arrived from England and found the regiment at Arrewage. A few days later they returned once more to Ebblinghem. Soon after their return a minor German attack took place at St. Eloi. For several days the regiment was kept ready to move at short notice from Ebblinghem in case the battle went unfavourably, but they were not required, and remained in reserve in the same neighbourhood until the second battle of Ypres began in April.

¶ Dick writes again on 13th March:

. . . I got back to my Regiment last night; they have moved out of their old billets nearer the firing line, as a support in case it is wanted, which at the

*Lady Sutton had left Brinsop at 4.30 a.m., arriving at Benham at 10 a.m., on March 8th and after seeing Dick off that night, motored back to Benham, arriving at 3 a.m. on March 9th.

moment doesn't seem likely. I had a very uncomfortable journey, one day at Havre, and one at Rouen, and then one at Boulogne, travelling always at night very slowly and in a crowded carriage. It seems rot coming all that way round instead of going straight to Boulogne. I met Father Waggett in the hotel at Boulogne, wasn't it funny? Cooncan is very well, but your grey, Blackthorn, was killed. Most of the Regiment are strangers to me, which makes it less nice than before, but every Regiment is the same. This country is in an awful state of mess but the mud is drying up. We can just hear the guns like a thunderstorm a long way off. . . .

¶ Three days later he writes of being back again in the old billets and the monotony of waiting, but adds:

People are very cheerful here on the whole, and all seem to think it will not last very long. . . .

¶ It was well perhaps that few realised how long the trial of endurance was to be.

¶ The next letters are dated from the same camp.

¶ To H.D.A.:

17th March, 1915.

My dearest Pam.—Thank you so much for your letters—I laughed a lot over your picture of Alfred Rothschild. There is not a lot of news. We were standing to, ready to move, during this recent fighting, but are back now in the old billets in which the regiment has been all the winter. I have got a quite comfortable billet which has a bedstead and a good stove in it—also plenty of fleas, which is less pleasing. Wyndham Portal amuses us a good deal, which is necessary as there is nothing to do. I mess with Astor and George Butler who have excellent stores of good food (caviare and I don't know what else). The weather is lovely at present, and one almost forgets the war is only 15 miles away. Most people are very bored but very optimistic. We have got some books and get the papers regularly. Some of the men are left in my troop, about a third I should think. Gotteridge* is the troop corporal of horse. The Regiment is scattered in a good many different farms and we see very little of the others except one's own Squadron. Best love. Dick.

¶ To his Mother:

21st March.

. . . Sunday. . . Such a lovely day and we have just had our open-air service, a very nice one and a nice parson. There is nothing of interest going on, we do a certain amount of training each morning to keep the men from getting slack. We are a bit depressed over these terrible casualty lists. It only just missed being the most decisive victory of the war owing to fog on the second day of the attack which prevented our artillery from doing its work and gave the Germans time to reinforce. As it stands it is not much more than quits, I am afraid;

* Gotteridge was a footman at Benham Valence, a Reservist of the 1st Life Guards, and returned to the Regiment on the outbreak of war.

but I suppose the Germans lost quite as heavily. They counted over 4,000 dead bodies of Germans. Things are quiet again now for the moment. I see we have lost three battleships in the Dardanelles but I suppose that is only to be expected. I got the chocolate alright, very many thanks for it. I have had a long letter from Ruth saying Reggie Hargreaves is badly wounded; I am so sorry about it; I hope he will pull through but not in time to return to this.

24th March, 1915.

. . . Yes, I have got all your letters and Pam's, I think, thank you very much for them. . . . There is very little news and things seem very quiet. I have been playing football to-day and hope to have got rid of some fat. We do troop training from about 9 till 11.30 each morning, and are free for the rest of the day. Yesterday I rode into Hazebrouck. I expect you are now at Benham for Ruthie's confirmation, I shall think of you all, I wish I could be there with you. It was very nice of ——— to write to Sir Horace, but I'm glad I didn't get on a staff. There is a very strong feeling here, and in every Regiment, about people not coming back to their Regiment when they are in need of them, and there will be tremendous feeling after the war about it. People feel, and quite right too, that everyone should do the same share of the dirty work that his arm, either Cavalry, Infantry, or Artillery, has to do. I went to lunch with the Blues a few days ago ——— happened to be mentioned, they are rather sore about him and say they won't have him back. . . . There is a lot of ill feeling with . . . for having got themselves soft jobs. I should think they will get the cold shoulder after the war. We get posts and papers regularly and quickly which is very nice. I heard from Desmond two days ago, I am glad he is still alright. Is Jim going strong? Please mention him when you next write. . . .

1st April, 1915.

My dearest Mother.—Thank you very much for your letter, which arrived to-day, also Pam's; I was so pleased to get them. I do wish I could have been with you for Easter. Wyndham Portal has got up some theatricals. I am taking a small female part, a two night show—yesterday was the first night. It really was a great success* and the men enjoyed it enormously. There is really no news and each day passes much the same as the last. Some of our mails have gone wrong somehow and we had no post for two days. The letters and parcels were put into the wrong lorry, and have gone to I don't know where—such a bore. Give my best love to all. . . .

8th April, 1915.

. . . There is very little or no news but I must write you a line to tell you I am very well and fairly cheerful. I am hoping to go over and see Jim and Desmond Fitzgerald on Sunday, as I believe they are going to have a rest about 14 miles from here. It will be very nice if I see them. There is nothing much doing in the fighting line just at present I think; and we hear very little shooting. I am afraid the Dardanelles have been a failure, but I suppose they will have another go. I think everyone thought it a much softer job than it proved

* It was. Dick had a most remarkable success as the leading lady.

to be. I suppose the garden at Benham was still a long way from being finished, wasn't it? You didn't say Philip had got any leave so I suppose he didn't. I wonder if poor Reggie Hargreaves will live . . . it really is terrible. Is Lyons still alright, I wonder? I haven't seen the Sussex Regiment mentioned as being in the Neuve Chapelle battle. I suppose you will go to Jim's wedding if he gets home and is married at Moreton Corbet. What a fuss seems to be going on in England over the drink question; I suppose it is very serious for the King to have to set the example*. . . . We are going to be inspected by General Byng to-morrow who commands this Division. I think it is rather rot having inspections in war time, but I suppose he is hard up for a job. . . Forgive this rotten letter. . .

13th April, 1915.

. . . We have moved our billets but only about two miles from the last ones, and are quite comfortable. Two days ago I went to try and see Jim, Desmond, and Mr. Claud, but after motoring 18 miles found it was the wrong brigade of Foot Guards, *i.e.*, the 1st Grenadiers and Scots Guards. However I found a few fellows I knew. Edward Stanley and Dalkeith and one or two others, and I saw the 15 in. gun in its position, which was most interesting. It is a wonderful machine. I shall go and try and find Jim and the others another day; I have had a letter from him now, so can find him alright. He says it is very doubtful about his getting any leave. I went to Hazebrouck this morning with a party of men, to be instructed in throwing hand bombs, which appear to me to be more dangerous to those who throw than those thrown at. . . . I am so glad Reggie H. is better. Please thank Pam for his letter and enclosure from Mrs. Hargreaves. . . . Joan sent me some honey which was very good. . . . The roads here are bad beyond belief and it is impossible to go more than 15 miles an hour in a motor. Cooncan is very well and fat but I am afraid is a little gone in the wind, which of course does not matter a bit for military work. The jersey you made is still very useful, as we get very cold days occasionally, but on the whole the weather has not been too bad. . . I am told on good authority that the French have killed a great number of the Teutons at Eparges, far more than their own losses, which is very satisfactory as the French were attacking and the Germans defending. What a pity the Dardanelles first attempt was a failure. . . . it is said here that W. Churchill would insist on the Fleet starting before the landing army was ready, with the result that two million pounds worth of shells were fired, and now the Turks are quietly repairing their damage, and it will have to be done again. . . .

¶Sir R. J. Corbet's promised leave was delayed by a renewal of fighting, and he was killed in action on the morning of 15th April. The death of this favourite cousin was a great blow to Dick, who writes of it to his mother on 20th April.

*The grave view taken by the military authorities of the effects of intemperance on the physique of recruits had led to restriction of the sale of intoxicants in England, under the Defence of the Realm Act, and the King had set an example of total abstinence from wine and spirits for the period of the war, as did also Lord Kitchener.

It is terrible about Jim. I had heard it rumoured but had a faint hope it wasn't true, as I didn't think there had been much fighting in that part of the line; there has been a good deal at Ypres. How terrible it is for poor Auntie Nee. Really the Coldstream has come to mean certain death. Desmond Fitzgerald is the only friend I have in the Foot Guards proper who has not been killed, and I suppose he will be the next. I do wish Jim could have got leave home to be married.... It is so sad Jim will never have seen the Germans utterly destroyed, as I believe they will be in the next two months. Every day preparations are going on and it is very interesting to sit by the railway and see everything being got ready. I am told on pretty good authority that the French are going to fire *200 thousand* shells per day on a 20 mile frontage for a week or eight days running, and they say there is no doubt whatever about breaking through. The British will do the same on a given bit of their front, in a smaller way. Great reinforcements will march through the gaps and join behind, and they expect to bag all the Germans in between over a distance of 80 or 100 miles. I don't know if this is true so don't quote me, I expect it is contrary to the censor anyhow....

¶On the 23rd April it is noted in the War Diary of the 1st Life Guards that the Brigade left Ebblinghem and marched from Les Cinques Rues (cross-roads) *via* Le Breards-Caestre-Godewaersvelde to a position of readiness at Abeele. This move was occasioned by the attack by the enemy with the aid of asphyxiating gases on the French position about Langemarck. Two Field Service Postcards were sent off by Dick to let his mother know that he was well, and later he was able to post a pencil letter, written on the 27th April, to her:

... As the papers will have told you the Kaiser is celebrating my birthday by a great attack north of Ypres under, it is supposed, Marshal von Hindenburg. For two days the position seemed to be very critical but now the Teutons are getting snuff, as enormous reinforcements have now arrived, both French and English. We had sudden orders to move at once three days ago, and had a very unpleasant 20 mile march in a north-easterly wind, and the dust was *awful*, my eyes are still bad in consequence. This is developing into the greatest battle of the war, as both sides are out of the old line of trenches and it has become a pitched battle. This Regiment is at present in support, and so only subject to odd shells now and then. The roar of the guns is almost deafening and a hundred times more than anything I have ever heard. Both sides have great forces engaged and more pouring up all the time by train and motor bus. Old Hindenburg will find other people besides the Germans have got some good railways and roads, unlike the poor Russians. The Canadians have fought magnificently and there are banks of German dead in front of them, in fact everywhere. The Germans must be losing colossally, as the place is alive with French aeroplanes directing their artillery, and I have only seen one German plane during three

days. As an instance of this, two days ago, our Cavalry Division was in mass in field, and the road near was packed with French infantry while the Germans shelled the village near where there wasn't a soul except a few women. We passed three Battalions of Territorials coming up two days ago, Durham Light Infantry. They seemed very fine fellows, and after a 15 mile march they were practically running so as to get at the Germans quicker. They had not been under fire before. . . .

¶Dick writes again on 2nd May to his mother:

. . . There has been a very big pitched battle north of Ypres which now we hope has come to an end with fearful losses to the Germans. Anyhow we have been taken out and have come back ten miles. The regiment has been very lucky so far, one Corporal of horse and two men killed and four or five wounded. The Germans have had hell the last four days and have left their dead unburied in heaps. We are hoping if all goes well to go back to the old billets to-morrow or the next day. We have had no real discomfort as of old and my car is generally with us full of food and blankets. Several people have tried to bag and stop it but we have managed to do them. I hear we have lost over 20 thousands in this battle, the Canadians who fought so splendidly, have lost 50 per cent. They found the Germans had *crucified* one Canadian on a door when they retook the ground. A few minutes before they had taken prisoner a whole German Company about 100 strong, so they at once killed the lot at the exact spot of the foul deed. Don't spread this about as these sort of things do no good. The German gas, I believe, is not so bad when you are prepared, and with flannel soaked in soda which has now been issued out (but I am glad to say we have had no opportunity of using) it is alright. The summer winds are generally west so I have no doubt the Germans will get some in return soon. I have never heard anything like the artillery fire four days ago, one incessant roar for two days. We had more guns than the Germans and at one place over a mile of French 75's so close that they were wheel to wheel, and the Germans were in rotten trenches thrown up during the night on the ground they had taken. Their losses are supposed here to be two Army Corps (about 90 or 100 thousand men). I am just off to bed; it is 8.45, quite late for us. . . .

¶Next morning, however, orders were countermanded, and the 1st Life Guards were set to dig fresh support trenches on the Vlamertinghe-Ypres road, and a few days later were thrown into the firing line of the Ypres salient. Dick writes of the first part of these movements to his step-father:

My dearest Pam.—I should have written before as I said, but we were suddenly sent back to Ypres in motor-buses two days ago. We dug trenches all one night, but since have been in reserve. It is an awful bore coming up without our horses, as we have nothing—no sponge or blanket or razor, and it is too cold at night to sleep much. We have not been in action and only occasionally under a very ill-directed shell fire, so have much to be thankful for. Poor old

Ypres is burning like mad, I should think it will be all burnt before long. It is now entirely deserted. . . . We hear the French have done very well near Arras. I hope this is true. The aeroplanes have been very active this morning. It is very interesting watching them circling about avoiding the shells, none have been hit that I have seen. I must stop as this is my only bit of paper.

Best love, Dick.

¶ The entry for 12th May in the Regimental War Diary continues the story:

Regiment took over trenches in accordance with Brigade Orders. . . . The line taken over was . . . at Verloren Hoek. Regiment relieved a battalion of the East Surrey. On taking over news was received that Lieut. H. Hulton-Harrop had been killed in the trenches during the day. Just as the relief was completed 2nd-Lieut. J. S. Woolley was wounded. Following officers were in trenches night of 12-13th: Lieut.-Col. Hon. A. F. Stanley, Capt. G. E. M. Mundy, Capt. J. J. Astor, Capt. R. Hamilton-Stubber, Capt. and Adjutant Hon. E. H. Wyndham, Capt. Sir R. V. Sutton, Lieut. G. H. Drummond, 2nd Lieuts. M. Seton-Kerr, J. S. Woolley, T. K. Robson, S. C. Bostock, Surg.-Lieut. E. D. Anderson. The left of the position occupied by the Regiment rested on the Ypres-Zonnebeke road and was some 150 yards in advance of the front trenches occupied by the Queen's Bays on the north of the road. This was a source of weakness as the line could be enfiladed from some houses just north of the road, which it was not easy to deny to the enemy should they advance. This section of the line was occupied by B Squadron, with D Squadron and H.Q. in a support trench 50 yards in rear. When Regiment took over these two trenches were not joined by a communication trench. This, however, was dug during the night. On the right of B Squadron was a gap in the line of some 150 yards in which a farm was situated. South of the farm was A Squadron, joining on the right with 2nd Life Guards. One machine-gun was posted under 2nd-Lieut. Bostock in B Squadron trench, the other, with 20 men of A Squadron under 2nd-Lieut. Seton-Kerr, was posted in a farm 300 yards in the rear of the position to form a *point d'appui*. At 3.30 a.m., 13th May, the enemy's guns began to register on the position. At 4.0 a.m. a very heavy bombardment began and lasted with unabated vigour till 7 a.m. This was unquestionably the heaviest bombardment the Regiment had experienced during the campaign. The enemy's *Minenwerfer* were particularly effective. At 7 a.m. the enemy's infantry advanced. They did not appear to be in any great strength, and made no frontal attacks on B Squadron, but made for the houses on the left before-mentioned. About 7.10 a.m. it was noticed that the right of the Brigade line was retiring. A Squadron was involved in this retirement. Regiment, less A Squadron, hung on for another 10 minutes, when it was forced to retire, both flanks being threatened. They rallied behind a mound 100 yards in rear of the support trench, but the enemy advanced feebly and presented no target. From this position Regiment moved to the left into the front trenches of the Queen's Bays, where they remained all day. Meanwhile A Squadron retired on G.H.Q.

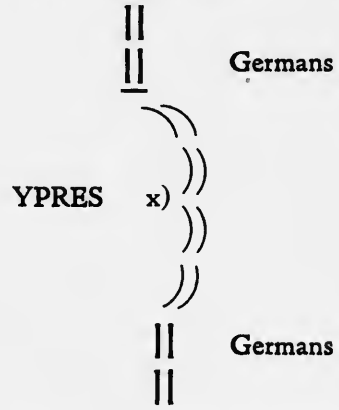
line which was occupied by the Divisional Reserve No. 2048. Corporal of Horse G. Attenborough and four men remained in a large shell hole just in front of the *point d'appui* (which had been destroyed by enemy's guns) until 10th Hussars counter-attacked at 2.30 p.m., when they joined in the counter-attack. Throughout the day Headquarters, B and D Squadrons remained in Bays' trenches, and all ranks owe a deep debt of gratitude to the latter regiment for the magnificent support and assistance they gave to the regiment throughout a very trying day. Throughout the day the trenches were very heavily shelled. In all the enemy's guns fired on the position for sixteen consecutive hours. Position lost in the morning retaken by brilliant counter attack by 8th Cavalry Brigade at 2.30 p.m. but they were unable to hold it, retiring again about 4 p.m. At 8.30 Regiment retired to Potijze in accordance with Brigade Orders.

¶ This action of 13th May, 1915, was one of the fiercest engagements of the whole war; the day's casualties amounted to 95 killed, wounded or missing, and among the wounded was Dick Sutton. The telegram informing his mother of this reached her at Brinsop on the 15th—a Saturday—and early on Monday morning she and Mr. Astley set off for London, and were met at Paddington with the news that Dick had already arrived safely, and that his wound was not serious. His letter written to reassure them, at the first possible moment, had not yet been delivered.

14th May, 1915.

. . . As you have probably heard by now, we have had hell in the front line trenches in front of Ypres. I have got a slight flesh wound on the face, and have in consequence come out of it. The poor old Regiment I am afraid had a very bad time, and I don't quite know how many are left. We had the most awful shelling I have ever dreamt to be possible from 4 a.m. till 7; how anyone survived I can't think. Then the Bosches attacked and drove back the Regiment on our right and so got on two sides of us, and came up to within 90 yards, when Col. Stanley told us to retire or we should have been surrounded, which at this juncture would have been very unpleasant, as neither side intend taking any more prisoners. We retired under an awful artillery fire and machine-gun fire; how on earth I wasn't hit again one cannot imagine; it was most unpleasant as those who were hit could not be got away and had to be left to the mercy of the Germans, which I am sure would be wonderful. Stanley rallied most of the Regiment about 300 yards away from our original trenches and eventually I hope got back with a good many into the second line of trenches about ¾-mile behind our line, which had been blown in. I am at present at Bailleul; I may perhaps go to Boulogne, but as I am so slightly hit I may be sent to Hazebrouck or St. Omer or somewhere. Anyhow I am thankful to say I have seen the last of this particular battle or at least I trust so. I hope the Germans do take Ypres; it is one vast stinking rubbish heap and only costs thousands of lives to hold, and is of no use whatever. It is such a triangle now in outline that those in the trenches holding it are shelled from three sides.

I have marked with a cross the place we were, which is the most horrible place in the whole front, as you may imagine. I wish I was just bad enough to get home but I am afraid there is no chance of it. . . .



The later phases of the war, with scientifically constructed trenches, bomb-proof shelters, and vastly improved artillery defence, have eclipsed in the minds of many the conditions of these days of 1915 in the trenches round Ypres, more especially in the Salient, that afforded such scanty protection to the slender force that held them. Many were so hastily dug, and so shallow that men could not stand upright in them, nearly all were half full, through the winter and early spring, of stagnant water and mud, while the savagery of the enemy in the treatment of British wounded and prisoners added a latent and revolting horror to danger. Those who saw the war through from beginning to end are unanimously of opinion that never were the conditions quite so appalling as those of which Dick's experience at this time was typical. His courage was never shaken, but his cheerful optimism covered an abhorrence of war and its conditions, more deep-seated and acute than that of most. His wound was in the forehead, and though he made light of it himself, the doctors at that time sent all who could travel home to England and he was sent off immediately. One of his brother officers wrote to him on the day he left:

My dear Dick.—I was delighted to see you sloping off over the sky-line the other day and concluded you would get out of that hell alright. I hope the head is not very bad. Am still flourishing at the moment. Do write the gup now and then to cheer us up. Shall miss you *badly* . . . Damn these Boches, I lost everything I had to eat, drink, or smoke, also my cloak, and it rained most of the afternoon, so have been rather cold and miserable since. At the moment

we are back at the huts, awaiting our future fate—L. I trust. Best of luck, old buck, and *a riverderci* soon. . . . A. wishes you all luck and says you were a *tiger* —confirmed by your squadron.

¶His C.O. (Major The Hon. Algernon Stanley) writes on 20th May, in answer to a note of Dick's from home:

Dear old Dick.—I was so glad to get your letter. I knew you had got safely away and hope you are not too bad—of course, you *are* to go home to England and get quite right again, as a wound like yours is an awful shock. We are still at Vlam, in an awful quagmire. I will write to you when we are released. I miss you awfully, Dick, and you did always play up to me so splendidly and helped so much. All luck to you, let me know how you get on.—Yours ever, A.

¶The first visit Dick paid in London was to Reggie Hargreaves in hospital, and then went home once more to Benham with his mother and step-father, where he stayed, with old friends coming and going, through six weeks of sick leave.

¶A letter to his sister, who was then at school at Aldeburgh, dates from the last week of this leave:

Benham Valence, Monday.

My dearest Ruthie.—Thank you so much for your letter. It is nice to be home again, but how I wish you were here too. Philip, as you know, has been here on leave and we wanted you badly. Your photographs turned up to-day and I like them awfully, don't you? Boss is here for Bank Holiday, and we are just off to fish. . . . Tibbie comes up here a good deal, which is very nice, and Uncle Reg. and Auntie Nee were here for two days. I wonder if the Zeps will go to Aldeburgh, I don't expect they will, but I expect they will to London. We have twice seen Father Cuthbert, but people are staying with him, which is rather a bore, as of course we don't see nearly so much of him as we should like to do in consequence. It is much nicer at the boathouse without Mansell. I wonder what he is doing—making shells, do you think?

Best love from your ever loving brother, Dick.

¶Dick returned to duty early in June, and his mother, who had been with him all through his convalescence, to Brinsop. He writes to her on his next visit to Benham, not long after:

. . . I came here yesterday till to-morrow for Uncle Ted's oft-postponed visit. So he is here now. He has been staying with Uncle Nipper for a week, so I thought it would be a splendid opportunity for him to come. Nipper, Connie and Maud have also come. . . . Ted is very much struck with all the improvements. . . . I went down to Mereworth for Sunday with Boss and Puss. I missed Bunny too dreadfully. . . . I am going up by the 9.56 to-morrow and as far as I can see shall have to do church parade this week-end. I had a very nice letter from Col. Stanley and he said he did not intend to apply for me back again for some time as he says he is going to let some of the lately joined

have a go. But don't tell everyone this. It is possible the War Office may not do as he wishes. I still get a good many headaches, and if I don't get rid of them before my next Board I shall certainly tell them. . . .

30th June.

. . . I am afraid I shall not be at home for Sunday. I am going to Cliveden to-day to see John Astor, who is on leave, and shall go on to Benham from there till Thursday night. Excuse this scrawly letter but I am rushed for time. . . . I hope you are coming on the 9th for a good visit and I shall try to get down often. I am very much looking forward to it. . . .

Ufford Place, Woodbridge, 4th July, 1915.

. . . You will be very surprised to see me at the above address. When I got back to London on Friday night I heard from Brookie* that Ruth was coming over to-day, brought over by Major Hoare in his motor, so I got special leave to go away again to see her, so here I am. Major Hoare is staying here (the owner of the Lucertola villa)† and went over first thing this morning in his car to fetch Ruth and his own girl from Aldeburgh. I loved seeing Ruthie, she was in great form, and I think improves in looks all the time. I went back to Aldeburgh with them this evening, and Ruth showed me everything with great pride, including the dormitory, in spite of some of the occupants having retired to bed, as it was about 8 o'clock. We all went to church in the morning, what a dear little church it is. Fancy my never having been here before; it interested me enormously to see Pam's former home and also all Brookie's lovely things. Aunt Trottie is also staying here, I always think she is so nice. I went before my medical board yesterday and was not passed fit. I am probably going down to camp this week, I think I shall like it better, and shall be able to be more at home. . .

Dick's mother, as always, fell in with his plans, and a great part of the next two months were spent by her at Benham, Dick with her whenever a day or even a few hours could be snatched from military duty. "Home—what a perfect place"; it was never far from Dick's thoughts, and his greatest joy was to be with his mother there. Towards the end of July he was offered an appointment on the staff of Sir H. Rawlinson, which came as a complete surprise both to himself and his near relations. None of them would have made any effort to obtain a post of comparative safety and comfort for Dick, but when the offer was made, unsought, it brought very great relief to his mother from the acute anxiety she had had to bear on his account, and was now to know for her younger son, who at nineteen was shortly to leave for the front. Dick wrote to her from London on July 25th:

*Mr. Edward Brooke was godfather to Ruth Astley. Mr. Hubert Astley had been for a time Rector of Ufford.

†A villa on Lake Como.

Hyde Park Barracks, Sunday.

. . . I am so looking forward to seeing you again soon. I have been stuck here this week-end as C. L. has gone away. . . it was his turn. You will be glad to hear I have had a letter asking me to go on Sir Henry Rawlinson's staff, he commands the 4th Army Corps, and I have seen Col. Brassey, who agrees to let me go, so I have accepted. George Boscawen is the other A.D.C. and Sir H. is a great friend of the Falmouth's, so I expect they are at the bottom of it, though of course I haven't a notion. I haven't told people so don't make it common property. I think it will be very interesting and I can always return to the Regiment if it were necessary. I suppose you haven't heard if Philip is likely to get to Brinsop in the near future? . . . I went to church this morning with Frank [Manners-Sutton] at St. Anne's, Soho; Madge Hastings was there, and I saw her for a moment afterwards. . . .

His appointment was hailed with cordial satisfaction by his friends in the Regiment, who wrote to assure him that for the time there was no need for his return, and to wish him luck. As a matter of fact the shock of the two wounds, and the strain of the campaign had told on him more than he himself realised. Writing on 6th August to his mother he says:

. . . I found on getting back yesterday that my Medical Board was at 12.30 and they passed me fit, after a good deal of deliberation, for staff work, so I suppose I may have to go out in a week or so, but I think I shall get some notice. . . . I am so glad they passed me as I think if they had not I should have lost the job. . . . It was so nice getting a peep of you and Ruthie, and I so enjoyed it. . . . I shall get down to Brinsop, I hope, to say good-bye. . . .

He left England about a fortnight later, and the next series of letters were all written from the Château de Labuissière, Fourth Army Corps Headquarters, near Bruay, in the neighbourhood of Béthune.

To his Mother:

25th August, 1915.

. . . Just a line to say I arrived this morning after a very good journey. I didn't get away from Boulogne till the evening as I found the day boat off owing to submarines. But the offender was caught near Margate by a destroyer. We are in a charming country house and it seems most comfortable. I will write again when I have taken in my new surroundings. . . .

27th August, 1915.

My dearest Pam.—Thank you very much for your letter. I was awfully sorry I didn't see you again before I went, but for ten days I was expecting to go at an hour's notice. It is very nice here, quite one of the nicest places in this part of France, as there are lots of trees, and the country isn't quite so flat as the rest of it. This is a very nice château, belonging to a man called the Marquis de Bertoux, and at one time belonged to the Dukes of Burgundy. I enclose two postcards

Photograph of Sir Richard Sutton
(taken with Captain The Hon. Paul Methuen at the Front).
From an enlargement of a snapshot.

of it, the central tower is 13th century and very fine. Things are very quiet indeed on this part of the front, and there is very little work for me at present. I go for a ride with the General at 7.30, breakfast at 8.30—then he works in his office from 9 till 1.30. I have got a small office out of his where I sit, answer the telephone, write any letters he may want, sort out casualty lists and jobs of that sort. In the afternoon he always goes round some part of the lines or goes to interview some of the subordinate Generals. The day before yesterday we went to see the French General commanding Army Corps on our right, which was very interesting. Yesterday he went to see two of the Brigadier-Generals at their headquarters, about two miles from the firing line. The second line of trenches are splendid, dug out to hold 20 men each with five feet of concrete and three feet of earth on the top of them, and quite shell proof. The inhabitants work in the harvest fields to within 2,000 yards of the front trenches. There is a château within two miles of the front trenches belonging to a very rich man, with a lovely garden most beautifully kept, delightfully mown lawns and flower beds, about ten gardeners working in it. Occasionally a shell drops in the garden, and immediately the hole is filled up and a new bit of turf put down, and the mess cleared away. The house contains the most wonderful collection of furniture, china, and pictures, that were valued at £350,000. He has 250 clocks (quite priceless, dear) and the owner will take nothing away. Please thank Mother for her letter and tell her I found all my kit, and Cooncan arrived yesterday from the Regiment looking very fat and well.... Please give my love to all.

The pictures enclosed show a typical French château built round three sides of a quadrangle, with the square mediaeval tower in the north-west angle, the south façade and wings of 18th century design, and a wide stretch of rose-beds bordering the approach to the house. In these pleasant quarters Dick lived for the next four months, proving, in the work of which he writes always so modestly, his ability in organisation and management, and those qualities of unselfish thoughtfulness and consideration for others, and cheerful good temper, that endeared him to all with whom he had to do. Extracts from his letters to his mother during the autumn form a fairly continuous journal:

2nd Sept. 1915.

... Things are quieter than ever; the silence before the storm.... How depressing the Dardenelles is....

4th Sept.

... Things are getting busy and a good many new guns have arrived. The General went round some of the Brigades of the new K. Army Divisions which have just come to us; they are a splendid lot of men and as smart as the Guards. I could tell you a few things of interest, but don't like to in letters, as there is always an off-chance of some spy getting hold of them, but as a matter of fact the spies are very few and far between now.... We certainly want a big victory somewhere, and I hope we may get it this month. The Boches will find

it hard to get their men back from Russia now they have got so far, if they should want them elsewhere. We hear from the secret service they are now beginning to be short of men....

6th Sept. 1915.

...I have been up in an aeroplane this morning for the first time and enjoyed it so much. It really is a wonderful sensation. We went up to over 8,000 feet and had the most wonderful view of the trenches spread out below...

8th Sept. 1915.

...I enclose a few photos for your book. They are not of any particular interest, except as examples of the destruction which takes place near the lines. They are of a village called Vermelles, about 800 yards behind our lines. We have got lovely hot weather again which is very nice; it was very cold for two days. The General has been very busy lately, and I have had more to do in the office than I had at first. Yesterday afternoon we went round some of the artillery belonging to this Corps, which was very interesting, seeing their different positions; they all seem wonderfully well hidden. I hear that Sir Horace Smith D. is going to take command in the Dardanelles instead of Sir Ian Hamilton; I hope this is true. I saw in the paper Phil Wroughton was wounded there; I hope it wasn't bad....

17th Sept. 1915.

...Yesterday afternoon several Generals came to see Sir H. so I got a car and went to find Lyons,* which I succeeded in doing. His Brigade (the 2nd) is out of the line and has been for 10 days and is resting about 10 miles from here. Lyons looked very well, he said only 30 were left in his Regiment of those who came out with him. The 8th Battalion of the Royal Berks are in this Brigade, and quite a lot of Stockcross men, he says. They are in the 1st Division of this Corps.... That 8-inch shell I told you of in my letter the other day did very little damage as the part of the trench where it fell happened to be empty. I suppose our Ruthie will soon be off back to defend the East Coast; it is bad luck for her not having seen Philip. I do envy Harry Mylius going off to the Lake; I expect he will have a very uncomfortable journey. The Italians seem to have got thoroughly stuck in their campaign like we have. I am very glad Ben† will probably be coming home, also that Phil. Wroughton is so slightly wounded; they must have had a terrible time in the Dardanelles, and no result, which is so awful....

23rd September.

...I saw an indecisive battle in the air yesterday but after a short time the German aeroplane flew down into its own lines, which was disappointing. I think the Budget is really quite a fair one... one must expect this enormous income tax, and live the simple life. I think it is quite good taxing 50% on war profits; I don't see why anyone should score out of the war, do you? The dust is dreadful here, and it is misery to be on the roads, even a motor. We generally do more riding across the fields which is much the nicest way to get there....

* Chauffeur at Brinsop.
† Gardener at Brinsop.

¶Two days after the last letter was written Philip Astley left for the front. His regiment, the 12th Lancers, had at this time been moved, with the greater part of the British Cavalry Corps, to the 1st Army area to take part in the Battle of Loos in the event of the British attack succeeding to a point that would permit of the employment of cavalry. So when he arrived at the front, Philip found himself quite near Dick.

¶To his Mother:

27th Sept. 1915.

. . . I am sorry to hear our Squax is on his way out, but I don't expect he will go to his Regiment at present, but remain at the Base here till wanted. The 12th are at this moment in a wood outside this tin hut, which is the office of the A. C. Sir H. R. has done splendidly and this Corps was magnificent; the battle started 6.30 on Saturday and by 1 o'clock we had taken 1,600 prisoners and 6 guns, and broken right through the German lines. Unfortunately Sir J. F., although asked to have up his reserves by 12 o'clock, didn't do so, and the Germans were able to regain their last and only remaining line of defences. The gas was not very good as regards killing Germans, but killed some of our own men. However we killed a good number with bayonet and a lot with the artillery. They are certainly splendid fighters; one regiment 800 strong was surrounded by one of R.'s brigades and fought on until they had fired their last round.

¶To H.D.A.:

1st Oct. 1915.

. . . Things have now quieted down here, as you probably have gathered from the papers. The operations have, on the whole, been a failure entirely owing to Sir John French not bringing up his reserves in time to make use of the victory gained on the first day (25th Sept.) when the German line was pierced. Since then masses of men have been put into the fight too late, and in consequence the casualties have been awful. This Corps has done awfully well, and delivered the attack on the 25th and took 20 guns and 1,690 prisoners out of the total bag, and all before 1 o'clock on the first day. The attack was at 6.20. A golden opportunity was lost by bad generalship on the part of Sir John French, who had been told frequently the necessity of having reserves up before the attack took place. However, although the Germans have been able to save their last line of defence, they have had a knock politically and lost a lot of guns and men, though I fear not nearly so many of the latter as ourselves. The French in Champagne have done well and have taken 100 guns and 25,000 prisoners, but I fear they have failed to break through the whole line of defences. I fear you must be feeling dear old Squax' departure awfully. The cavalry have not been in action, at least only one Division of them, and that only for a short time, and I don't think they will be, anyhow for a long time, so at present you need not be anxious. They were all up here during the attack in case of a German débâcle, but have now gone away to the rear. We have got 12 German

guns outside the front door, which this Corps captured when they stormed Loos and Hill 70—also trench mortars and a lot of machine-guns, one of which is a Russian one, captured by the Prussian Guard and brought over here to use against us. I went into Loos soon after it was captured, but as it was being shelled by the Germans both with high explosives and poisonous gas shells I was quite glad to come away. The battlefield was a horrible sight, covered with our dead, and the German trenches were full of their dead, some had been bayonetted, others had their heads flattened by the butt-ends of our men's rifles. Their dug-outs were enormously deep and quite safe from the bombardment, but some of the entrances had been blown in by our shells, and all the occupants must have been buried alive. One dead German, evidently a brave man, lay outside the trench with two of our own men dead in front of him. He had an Iron Cross on. I picked up a German rifle which I thought Ruthie would like to have, but don't know how to send it home, so must wait till someone goes on leave. Lyons' regiment suffered very heavily in the assault, but I have not been able to find out about him yet, no names are known. Please give my best love to Mother and Ruth and thank Ruthie so much for her letter, and tell her I will write to her. . . .

To his Mother:

5th October, 1915.

. . . I have not seen Philip yet as the cavalry have moved a long way back to the rear. His late Colonel, Wormald, was killed by a chance shell two days ago; it is terribly bad luck, he had just been made a Brigadier-General, as you know. This Army Corps, or rather what was left of it, has been out of the line for several days now, and our successors have lost a good deal of the ground we won with so much work, preparation and loss of life. The Bulgarian situation seems tiresome: I do hope they will not send troops from here and so kill Bulgars instead of Germans. I can't see why Bulgaria and Greece can't fight out their own quarrels among themselves. What terrible times we do live in, don't we, the casualties are quite awful. I don't think the 12th are likely to do any fighting for a long time, which is a blessing now as Pippin is out. It is very cold and damp here now which adds to the depression. I am not writing up my diary, but am writing an account of the battle, which will be much more interesting. I have got a German rifle for Ruthie, but don't know how to get it home at present. The Germans are reported to be bringing a lot of men from Russia. . . . I hope they may get hit there by the winter. Every German Regiment on this front has 21 days in the trenches on end, which shows they are short of men for the moment anyhow, and I think the winter is going to hit them harder than it does us. I am enclosing two photos of some out of the ten German guns which this Corps took on the 28th. I told you, didn't I, that we took a Russian machine-gun which the Germans had previously captured from the Russians? . . . .

20th Oct. 1915.

. . . I went over and saw Pippin yesterday, and found him in great form and liking it much better than Dublin. He had a very good billet in a farmhouse, in quite nice country about 20 miles from the line. He was looking very clean

and tidy and seemed to have chosen his kit with much judgment. I believe they are going off shortly to a place near Boulogne. I thought all his brother officers in his squadron were most charming fellows. I think they are going to settle down to the routine of winter quarters; anyhow most of the trenches this winter are very different from last winter, and are comparatively safe and comfortable. I do wonder how things will go in Servia and Russia. I rather wish Smith D. had been given command instead of Monro. We went all round the trenches on our front yesterday which took from 10.30 a.m. till 6.0 p.m. The Germans were not shelling much, but just as we were returning they attacked the quarries, which have been attacked and re-attacked since 25th September. So we were caught in a battle which was most interesting, especially as we were far enough off to be fairly safe except from stray shells. The Germans failed to get into the quarries.

27th Oct. 1915.

...You will be glad to hear I have got Lyons attached to the 4th Corps Headquarters troops, so he is now safe and comfortable for the rest of the war, which he richly deserves; how he escaped on 28th September I cannot understand, he really has nine lives. I have arranged for him to have a week's leave, so shortly I hope he will be driving your car. I should think he has seen as much hard fighting as anyone in the army. The weather is odious and we have all had colds, but they are better. Sir Henry had to stay in the house two days. There is no fighting going on at present. There is an inspection to-morrow, I wonder if the Boches will try to drop some bombs. I hope to get some leave some time next month as I think Sir H. is going when he can find time.... I am glad to hear that Ben is going on well. Two of the Benham keepers were wounded the other day, they are in the Royal Berks, which is in this Corps...

On the 31st October, Dick telephoned to his mother that he had arrived at home, and she and Mr. Astley joined him at Benham next day. He had only a week but filled it to the utmost, shooting every day, with all the old friends he could collect at short notice coming and going as in the old days. He writes of this time to his sister after he had returned to France:

13th Nov. 1915.

...I was at home for a week's leave, and did so wish you hadn't gone back to school. Father and Mother came to Benham while I was at home.... The weather here is perfectly awful, it rains all day and every day, and the mud is up to one's eyes. I have had a letter from Philip, he has moved back about 30 miles from here, so it is difficult to see him, but I shall go over and do so. We have had no letters for two days, as the boats are not able to cross in this gale, and the nets across the Channel which kept off the subs. are broken by the waves and will have to be mended up. The trenches must be in an awful state. I haven't been up very lately but we are going round soon....

¶To his Mother:

17th Nov. 1915.

. . . Many thanks for having the chessmen sent here, they will help to pass the long evenings, it is practically dark by 4 p.m. . . . Did you read St. David's attack on the G.H.Q. staff in the House of Lords? I have no doubt some reform is needed but it seems a pity people don't trouble to correct facts before discussing them in the Houses of Parliament. Winston made a clever speech, he is very cunning to get loose from the Government . . . before it sinks. I don't think it will stand another disaster in the Dardanelles, and one at Salonika too. Both are quite likely I fear. . . .

¶Dick's hopeful predictions that his young brother would not be hurried into the battle zone had not been fulfilled, for he joined his regiment immediately, and a few weeks later had his first experience of the trenches in the chalk pits near Mazingarbe, but came through unhurt.

¶To H.D.A.:

27th Nov. 1915.

. . . The cold here is something awful, but it is much better than the rain and mud. We went round the trenches this morning, leaving here at 6 a.m. as it is the quietest time, and certainly things seemed very peaceful, part of the trenches we were in are only 25 yards from the Bosches. I have taken a new flat in South Audley Street, and have told our "Mr. Keeble" to do it up. . . . As I had only spent £12 on the other little flat I thought I could give it up without undue extravagance in war time. . . . Pippin is with the two Welsh Regiments of 1st Division of their Army Corps; he has had four days in the trenches and is now in reserve till Monday, when I hope he will be able to come and spend the night here. . . .

¶To his Mother:

7th December, 1915.

. . . Thank you very much for your letters, which I have loved getting; I am afraid I am not such a good correspondent. Fancy Pippin writing four sheets, I expect he had a great deal to say about his first experience of war. I was very glad to have him here safely back, as I fancy he was keener to see all he could than to take rigid precautions such as keeping in a dug-out. It rains night and day and everything is a sea of mud, and the trenches knee-deep in some places. The only comfort is that it is equally vile for the Boches. . . . Posts have been irregular on account of the gales, and we don't get our paper of the day now, which is sad. . . . Oh, the Government and K., why on earth can't they go for one thing and stick to it? And why wasn't the Bagdad expedition reinforced two months ago, instead of that wild goose chase to Salonika? . . .

¶To H.D.A.:

15th Dec. 1915.

. . . Thanks most awfully for the honey and treacle that has arrived from you; both most thoroughly appreciated. . . . I am so glad Claud Willoughby is

on his way home from Gallipoli. I don't see what can avert a disaster there now we have elected to wait until the Turks got all the shells from Germany they want. These continual failures and retreats, of expeditions which ought never to have started, is most depressing, isn't it? The Germans always look for a weak spot and hammer it with their full strength, while we always look for a strong spot and then try and hammer it with half ours, and then the Authorities are surprised and pained by a disaster which would have seemed inevitable to any soldier who carefully considered the difficulties and the means provided for carrying the thing through. Things are quiet here and the casualties are small, but the discomfort is great, and each day seems to have done nothing towards bringing this black age to a close. I hope we are on the verge of some big changes in those who conduct the war—better late than never I suppose. These long evenings are very tedious, and I play a good deal of chess as I haven't much to do. I haven't heard of Philip lately; he is so far back that I haven't been able to go and see him. How I wish we were all together at Brinsop for Xmas. This time last year we thought we should be either buried or at home before the next Xmas. Much love, your ever loving Dick.

¶ To his Mother:

H. Q. (Advanced) 1st Army, 21st Dec. 1915.

. . . A line to wish you as happy a Christmas as is possible in this vile war. My address is as above now; Rawlinson having just been appointed to succeed Haig in command of the 1st Army. We have moved here to-day. Not nearly such good quarters in spite of being an Army as we had at Labuissière. I am delighted Rawlinson should have an Army, but from my own point of view I like being with a Corps better. This Army consists, as I expect you know, of four Army Corps, 1st, 3rd 4th, and 11th, if up to strength nearly two hundred thousand men. It is raining as usual. It is very sad leaving our friends at the 4th Corps, I liked them all so much. Sir Douglas Haig has taken a good many of his Staff to St. Omer, and their successors have not been appointed yet, or at least have [not] come here I should say. Everything now seems being done which we ought to have done a year ago, and I am sure a big difference will be seen in the situation during the next few months in our favour and high time too . . . .

26th Dec. 1915.

. . . Thank you so much for the socks, which arrived quite safely, and which I have got on at this moment. . . . We had a wet day for Xmas. Sir Henry and I went to early service here in a small room in the village, which smelt very strongly of beer; it seemed so funny. We went to luncheon with the Commander-in-Chief at St. Omer. Sassoon has gone as private secretary to Haig, so until to-day the General and I have had our meals alone together. The rest of the staff have two other messes separate. Major-General Barrow, the new Chief of Staff, arrived to-day, so we are now three. I miss my friends at the 4th Corps very much, but they are only eight miles off, so I see some of them. The Guards Division, which are at present in this Army, are only six miles from here, so I hope to see Desmond. Lord Cavan is going to be given command of

an Army Corps, and Fielding, who was Jim's Colonel at the commencement of the war, will succeed him in command of the Guards. Cavan is a first-rate man, and I am so glad he has got a Corps. Tell Pam the General was much amused over his sketch. . . .

STAFF DUTY WITH FOURTH ARMY, JANUARY, 1916-1917: (1) JANUARY-MARCH, 1916; (2) PREPARATION FOR, AND FIRST TWO PHASES OF, BATTLE OF THE SOMME; (3) LAST PHASE OF SOMME CAMPAIGN; (4) AUTUMN IN FRANCE.

RESUMABLY Dick either did not complete, or did not preserve, his notes on the Battle of Loos to which he refers in his letter to his mother of 5th October, but from the time Sir Henry Rawlinson took over the command of the 1st Army, Dick kept his own record and notes of the important actions that followed, and in the light of after years it is most interesting to find how clear was his grasp of the situation, and his view of its necessities, though, in common with his contemporaries, his hopes for a speedy end to the war inspired his belief in its probability. And indeed, the more that transpires of the internal state of Germany, much of which was known to the Higher Command of the Allied Forces, the more credit for endurance may be conceded to the enemy in those long campaigns.

Private Notes from R.V.S.'s Diary commencing 12th Jan. 1916.

January 12. Admiral Sir George Warrender, who has just given up the command of 1st Battle Squadron, arrived as a guest of the Army Commander for two days. In the afternoon the A.C. took him round some of the heavy artillery and showed him the 8-inch howitzers and the heavy guns mounted on railway trucks. General Sir H. Wilson, who now commands the 4th Corps, came to dine. The conversation so far as the war was concerned was somewhat pessimistic. Both the Army Commander and General Wilson said it was very doubtful whether the Germans would be weak enough this summer for us to be able to defeat them, and that their final defeat would probably not take place till the following summer, 1917. This would only be achieved if the Allies could remain solid, and the economic resources of the whole British Empire were mobilised. General Wilson said that he had been over part of his Corps' front in the morning, and the enemy were firing more shells than we were. They are driving five mine shafts on his front with incredible speed

and faster than our miners can countermine. When one thinks that the Germans are firing ammunition against the whole of the French & Russian armies, as well as finding officers and ammunition for Turks, Austrians and Bulgarians, and financing the whole of their Allies, one really feels in despair of beating such a wonderful and virile nation. Admiral Warrender told us that the French and Italian Navies were not combating the submarine danger with skill in the Mediterranean, and the portion of that sea where the enemy submarine successes have been has not been in our zone, which is avoided by the enemy. He also told us that the Admiralty had seized all papers, etc., of Von Papen, the American German attaché, when his ship was in Falmouth, and found receipts from plotters in America for blowing up ammunition factories there. German submarines are very active in sowing mines in the North Sea. The only event of any interest on the front of this Army was a feint attack with smoke which caused the Germans to man their parapets and open a brisk rifle and machine-gun fire. Our guns opened a heavy enfilade shrapnel fire on their front line trenches, which it is hoped inflicted considerable casualties on them. This always seems to me a very effective way of killing Germans. When enveloped in a fog of smoke he must leave his dug-outs and keep up a concentrated machine-gun and rifle fire into the smoke, for fear of being attacked suddenly by an invisible foe. And when the enemy are in their fire trenches the artillery should be able to do considerable execution. Why it is not done frequently on a large front I cannot imagine.

January 13. Has been a very uneventful day. A prisoner was taken of 233rd Regiment. His eyesight was very bad, and he had been twice rejected, he states, before being finally accepted. This is interesting and shows the enemy margins in men are not so good.

The following extracts from letters found on prisoners recently taken by the French have been reported to our intelligence branch: (1) "From Scholen, dated 18th Nov., 1915. Next Saturday all the 18 year old boys have got to join." (2) "Magdeburg, 10th Dec., 1915. All of us older men have now gone off; only the classes 1870-1872, 44 to 46 years of age, still remain here."

General Budworth came in at tea-time and discussed a plan for shelling German rest billets at Carvin (about 7 miles behind their line) with 6-inch guns. He proposes to shell some of the villages between here and that place, and leave Carvin alone for a bit, hoping thus to collect more Germans there when the appointed day for shelling C. arrives. Nearly all the prisoners taken lately state that their respective regiments go back to Carvin to rest, when they are relieved in the trenches. I should think it is full of Germans for we have never shelled it before, in fact, have only four guns with sufficient range to do so. General Budworth says he is sure the General commanding the Turkish guns in Gallipoli must have spared us on purpose.

January 14. The Army Commander went to see an exercise by two French divisions. They delivered an attack on a dummy trench position on a front of

about 1½ miles. The manoeuvre was very well organised and it was an interesting sight to see two divisions manoeuvre in the open. The country where it took place is open downs, in fact on the site of the battle of Crecy.

January 15. The C.-in-C. had a conference of three Army Commanders. He intends to hold one every Saturday.

January 19. General Monro came to see Sir Henry Rawlinson on his way from Marseilles to Boulogne. He was still very lame from his accident in November. He told Sir H. that he considered it very unlikely that any attack would be made either on Salonika or Egypt, and that it was merely a bluff to make us keep large forces in both places, while the Turks and Germans applied their full energies to destroying our expedition against Baghdad which, owing to our mode of strategy of sending one division at a time and thus always being in inferior numbers to the enemy, they were more than likely to succeed in doing. The situation at Salonika in the earlier days had been most odd. German officers in uniform were actually to be seen walking about the streets. The Greek Government and Commanders would not even allow defensive positions round the town to be reconnoitred by our staff. The town was crowded with Greek soldiers dressed in khaki paid for by us. Of course all this has been changed for the better during the last few weeks. He said he considered the situation in Mesopotamia very grave; the relieving force he considered far too small, and if a junction with General Townshend was effected it is quite possible that the relieving force might be besieged as well. Sir Henry told me that the French on this front are to be reinforced by Russians (note inserted by R.V.S.—*since . . . abandoned*). There are plenty of French rifles and ammunition here which would be no use in Russia as it differs from their rifle, and so the complication in ammunition supply would make their use on the Eastern front very difficult.

January 20. General Joffre paid a visit to 1st Army and presented Generals Haig and Rawlinson with the Grande Croix of the Legion of Honour. He saw a demonstration of trench mortars and smoke bombs. He inspected a Brigade of 1st Division and one of 12th Division.

January 24. No news at all on this front for the last four days. The news from Mesopotamia seems as bad as anyone here expected. It seems hardly possible it could end in success as the authorities sent the miserably inadequate force of one division (14,000 men) against four Turkish divisions entrenched. With modern arms the minimum an attacking force can lose in a battle is 30 per cent. General Aylmer has fought two battles and his force must be reduced by at least 50 per cent., and he still has the last Turkish position before Kut to force, and his force cannot exceed 7,000 tired troops. The strength of the Turks in Mesopotamia has been known for months to be four divisions and these have probably been reinforced. We have five divisions idle at Salonika where they never could have been of any use, as it was far too late to save Servia before they went there. We have 11 divisions in Egypt which the Turks are most unlikely to attack. Sir H. Wilson, who surveyed the defences of Egypt and drew

out a scheme of defence when he was at the War Office, said eight divisions were enough to make Egypt quite secure against an attacking force of half a million, which is more than the Turks could either produce or supply. We have therefore eight surplus divisions in the East, two of which would have made the relief of Kut not a possibility but a certainty, and probably the capture of Baghdad also. As long as we distribute our forces where we are dictated to from Berlin the war is hardly likely to go in our favour. We neglect the first rule of strategy and are always in inferior numbers to the enemy at the critical place and at the critical time.

¶Dick wrote on this same date to his mother, not of these disappointments and anxieties of the war, only of the little things of home and family news, and of hopes for leave in the following month. He mentions a meeting with his brother, who was again in the trenches, and whom he was allowed to bring back to H.Q. for one night. The War Diary is resumed on 26th January.

January 26. The air photographs taken during the fine day yesterday are very interesting. They disclosed the fact that the Germans had done a great deal of work all round the Loos salient. They have made numerous assembly trenches, and a great many saps out from their front line towards our own. This points to their preparing to deliver an attack in the near future, and to-morrow being the Kaiser's birthday, the Army Commander thinks it quite possible they may have to go. He has therefore made arrangements with the French on our right to give us the additional help of their artillery should it be required. He has also made arrangements to have motor-buses ready to bring up our reserves from Lillers, where they are resting, and I quite believe the Germans are willing to sacrifice their men for an attack against us the success of which against our numbers and our artillery must be very uncertain. But of course every precaution must be taken. If they don't mean to attack why have they dug assembly trenches and saps?

January 27. No hostile attack has taken place, in fact last night and this morning have been quieter than usual. But late in the afternoon the Germans made a small attack against the 1st Division. It was repulsed by machine-gun fire. The Germans fired about 2,000 shells against the 47th Division trenches.

January 28. The shelling of our trenches in the Loos salient continues, but so far the enemy has not cut the wire. General Gough came in the evening and said he watched the bombardment of his 1st Corps trenches by the Germans just south of the La Bassée canal, and it was most accurate and intense. He considers they will attempt an attack. It seems we are in for a four days' bombardment if the Germans intend to attack on a large scale, as the aeroplanes report no extraordinary train movement behind the line, nor have they been shooting at our barbed wire entanglements—it does not appear they will. G.H.Q. send word they think an attack likely.

January 30. The German bombardment has ceased and has been followed by no attack. They have, however, attacked the French on two different parts of the line, and captured 150 prisoners at one and 900 at the other. The French have regained most of the trenches, and the operations have no military value whatever, but they are a bore as they help to cheer up the German people and depress the French.

February 1. We went to G.H.Q. Lord Derby and Lloyd George were there. They say the Labour situation is very unsatisfactory. The Trades Unions appear not to be playing the game, and in consequence the output of shells is only a third of what it ought to be. The Trades Unions only allow the men to make 45 shells a day, and the 8 hours Act is still strictly adhered to. Munition factories have been started with women workers, the average output per head was 75 shells a day and this increased to over 100. These figures show that the men are turning out less than a third of what they could, and in consequence we shall not have ammunition in any real bulk for another four months. The crime of these men is worse than murder, for they are murdering their own flesh and blood, and one can only hope that after the war they will starve, which is most likely, as they make no attempt to save their large wages. When one thinks that every man, woman, and child in Germany is working 15 and 16 hours a day for their country it makes one very ashamed of the nation, which most certainly deserves defeat. 150 4.5 howitzers are finished and are being sent to Russia via Archangel.

February 2. About 300 Germans attacked north-east of Ypres at 11 am. this morning. They were mostly killed, a few managed to escape back into their own trenches. What the Germans hope to gain by these little attacks it is difficult to see—they appear to be a pure waste of life, with no possibility of gaining anything of any material value, except to attract attention. The enemy continue digging assembly and assault trenches round the Loos salient, which looks as if they still meditate an offensive there.

February 5. General Monro took over command of the 1st Army to-day and General Rawlinson went to Tilques to form the Headquarters and Staff of the 4th Army.

February 8. Some of the Staff of the 4th Army have assembled. Major-General Montgomery, Chief of the Staff; Major-General Budworth, Artillery Adviser; Major-General H. Sutton, Quartermaster-General; Col. Pitt-Taylor, G.S.O., 1st grade; Majors Vivian and Luckock, 2nd grade; Captain Loder, 3rd grade. It appears the 4th Army will have a highly efficient Staff, and all are very nice as well. Montgomery, who was Chief of the Staff to the 4th Corps, is a flyer, only 40 years old and started the war as a major. General Budworth is a most efficient gunner: he also started the war as a major. Pitt-Taylor and Luckock gained high reputations at the Staff College, and have both done very well out here.

¶Dick writes of these changes to his mother in a letter dated 6th February.

H.Q., 4th Army.

. . . Note the new address. Sir Charles Monro has arrived at last, and taken over command of 1st Army. And we have moved back between St. Omer and Calais. The 4th Army is in the process of being formed, and the Staff are assembling here. I don't know which Army Corps will come to it. . . . A fellow called Lloyd in the Rifle Brigade has come here as 2nd A.D.C. He was wounded in the Marne and is minus the elbow joint of his left arm. He seems a very nice fellow. I believe they had a good shoot at Benham, but have not heard except from Father Cuthbert. I hear rumours that the sale of petrol is to be prohibited in England. Rather a good thing. . . . prevent everybody from motoring about, but I fear it will be an awful bore for Unks.* I don't know what he will do. I hope I shall get some leave soon, there are a lot of things I want to do and see to. . . .

¶This part of the journal concludes with a note on the general situation.

The general situation, although perhaps on the surface not very rosy, is highly satisfactory as far as the British Army in France is concerned. The change in the High Command is having and will continue to have an enormous effect for the better of the whole Army. A great deal of trouble is being given to training while units are out of the line, especially in the training of officers, who are all very keen to learn. The artillery, owing to having much more ammunition to practise with, is improving beyond all recognition. The staffs are greatly improving too, and the best men are finding their way to the top everywhere. The French infantry are decidedly tired, and they are holding the line as thinly as possible in order to be able to pull out and rest as many corps as they can. The Germans must be aware of this and have made several minor attacks against them which have been attended with success. The Higher Commands are expecting an enemy offensive on a large scale. It is more than possible that the economic situation in Germany demands a decisive result in the West, which is the only theatre of war where a result can be in any way decisive, however great a success it may be. The Germans have been very busy lately digging assembly trenches round the two weakest spots in our line, the Ypres and Loos salients. On these two portions of the line they have pushed forward saps towards our trenches at intervals of every 100 yards. These works are being made under considerable difficulty, as the sap heads are continually shelled by our artillery and the losses among the men working must be considerable. The working, however, continues steadily as shown by the air photographs. The enemy have made several small attacks against our trenches in various places; the largest was made by 300 men, the smallest by 18. In every instance the attackers have been practically killed to a man without reaching our line anywhere. The motive in these small assaults is very difficult to see, but they are thought to be blinds. It seems probable that the main German attack will be made against the French, and less important ones against us. The small operations at Frise

*Mr. R. Astley was now in charge of Dick's estates as his agent was living about 20 miles from Benham.

and Vimy may have been feelers to ascertain the resisting power of the French. Should a very heavy blow be struck against the French we should be in a position to help them with two Army Corps on any part of their front. All arrangements are being made for any eventuality. The enemy have for months now been trumpeting an attack in Salonika and Egypt; both these operations are undertakings of the greatest difficulty, and it is most doubtful if the enemy ever had the slightest intention of carrying them out. They, however, succeeded in persuading us to send 13 divisions to Egypt and five to Salonika, which gives them more hope of being able to carry out a successful offensive against the Western front.

February 11. Brigadier-General Charteris, head of the Intelligence, had a meeting of the Chief Intelligence Officers of each Army to-day to discuss the expected German attack. Most of the evidence points to an attack on the Ypres and Loos salients, but the German troop movements are towards Verdun, where they have now two Corps in reserve and two more appear to be on their way there. The secret agents report great activity behind the German line there. In their recent local attack on the 33rd French Corps at Vimy, the Germans fired 15,000 shells on the 800 yards of trench which they subsequently took. A report from the 10th French Army on these operations has just come in and reads as follows:

"On 28th January a forward French artillery observation officer noticed that all the infantry in the first (French) line trench had either been killed or had fallen back. As his telephone line had been cut by the enemy bombardment, he made his way back to the nearest telephone, and informed his Brigade H.Q. that the first French line was unoccupied. In consequence the artillery barrage which had been behind the first German line was lifted back on to the first French line by the whole of the Artillery of the Division concerned. The Division to the south did not conform to this, as it had no information whether the first French line had been evacuated or not. As a matter of fact it had. So there was a gap of 100 yards or more between the two barrages. The artillery observer on Lorette saw the enemy's infantry slip in single file through the gap between the curtain fire, and occupy the first French line with practically no loss. The observers on Lorette were not able to bring any fire to bear, not being connected up with the artillery concerned. On the 8th February flashes were observed from 100 gun emplacements; it is reckoned that 15,000 heavy shells were fired by the enemy in 3½ hours on a front of 800 yards. The French attempted a barrage of 75's, but had not sufficient ammunition to keep it up the whole time. The whole area was hidden by smoke, so the enemy's infantry were not seen to advance. The French are much impressed by the method and accuracy of the enemy's artillery, which they state has improved 80 per cent. His liaison and observation are perfect, the quality of munitions has also improved. After the attack on the 8th, 48 hours elapsed before the French were in a position to counter-attack. They had not found time to make dug-outs worthy of the name during the months they held the line. The French counter-attack completely failed. The French prepared their attack by a bombardment,

but the enemy's barrage was much heavier than their bombardment. As soon as the French artillery lengthened fire, red flares were sent up by the enemy, and their artillery barrage was intensified, machine-gun and rifle fire also being opened. The explanation is the enemy had prepared dug-outs during the 48 hours good enough to protect them from the 75's, which were the only guns the French had available. The 33rd Corps lost 1,500 men, and the 12th Corps about the same. The French made another counter-attack which failed and they lost 300 men. The infantry concerned feel the enemy is fresher and full of attack, and backed by means they do not possess, and are accordingly depressed. The beginning of all this trouble was the fraternising; the enemy was able to judge the weakness of the French defences."

Note (by R.V.S.).—Although it is very easy to criticise, the above report discloses much that is unsatisfactory. In the first place it shows bad supervision by the Brigade and Divisional Commanders and Staff in not seeing that the front line had adequate dug-outs built in it, and was in a proper state of defence.

Secondly. The telephone communications appear to have been very bad between the different artillery groups, thus allowing gaps in their curtain fire.

Thirdly. The infantry seem to have evacuated their trenches without informing their artillery of what they were doing, and in consequence allowed the enemy to occupy their trenches with insignificant loss.

Fourthly. The Brigade and Divisional Commanders and Staff must have been entirely out of touch with the situation, hence the inexcusable delay of 48 hours before a counter-attack was delivered.

It has been proved up to the hilt in this war that counter-attacks never succeed unless delivered at once, as the enemy has time to dig suitable defences. They are only a waste of life. If for some reason a counter-attack cannot be delivered at once, it must be prepared by a concentrated bombardment of heavy howitzers, not field guns, if it is to succeed. It appears that the French infantry on this front is exhausted and depressed, and that the Commanders and Staff are lax. Any two of the items mentioned above are sufficient to cause a bad break in the line, and it is lucky the Germans did not press home their success with large forces or the result might have been serious.

February 14. The enemy have been bombarding the Ypres salient during the last two days, and an attack there is very likely. The enemy have concentrated considerable artillery. Some heavy calibre shells which did not explode were found to have Russian marks on them, and are of a different calibre to the German gun ammunitions. This points to the use of captured Russian artillery against us.

February 17. There has been a good deal of fighting in the southern part of the Ypres salient. The Germans took some 500 yards of our front line trench at the "Bluff," which gives them better observation of our lines. The 17th Division have delivered two counter-attacks, the first failed altogether with a loss of 600 men, the second partially succeeded with a loss of 400 men. It is thought here that the failure is due to an insufficient preparation by the heavy

howitzers, and too much confidence being put in the use of 18-pounders, which are not powerful enough to kill the defenders of a modern trench. The fighting here has caused us some 2,000 casualties, and the enemy have suffered only minor loss. The activity seems to have subsided, while an efficient scheme for the recapture of the "Bluff" without heavy losses is being considered. The C.-in-C. went up to the 2nd Army yesterday to discuss the matter.

February 20. General Castelnau arrived at G.H.Q.; the object of his sudden visit was, I understand, to discuss with Sir D. H. what help he could give the French in the event of their being heavily attacked in the neighbourhood of Verdun, which the French Higher Command consider to be imminent. It was settled that assistance, either direct or indirect, would be given.

February 21. The Headquarters of 4th Army was ordered to Querrieu, near Amiens, and the A.C. was told that three Army Corps would be put under his command. We proceed forthwith as above. The 3rd Army received orders to take over the line of the 12th French Army Corps, and that Corps proceeded at once to the Verdun area.

February 23. The 3rd Army was ordered to take over the line of the 21st French Corps. This Corps proceeded southwards also.

The Verdun Battle. After a very heavy bombardment on a 16 mile front, the Germans attacked on the north of the Verdun salient on 23rd February. The attack was on a very large scale indeed; in the first 24 hours considerable progress was made by the enemy, who took somewhere about 10,000 prisoners, but no guns. The enemy losses were, of course, heavy, and the French estimate them at 30,000 in the first two days of the battle.* The French took up their main line of defence about 3½ miles behind their original front line; on Thursday, 24th February, the Germans stormed the fort [of Douaumont] but were expelled by a French counter-attack, which secured the French main line of defence for a time, at all events. The Germans made several serious efforts on the following day to pierce this line but were repulsed—and the battle seems now to have lulled. The reason of this may very probably be that the Germans are moving forward their heavy guns to support their infantry in a great assault of the present French positions. The French lost very heavily, both from the original bombardment, and the counter-attacks on Fort Douaumont, where the situation still remains obscure. They have, however, considerable reserves and should be able to cope with a further German effort.

February 27. The 1st & 3rd British Armies received orders to divide the line at present held by the 9th and 33rd French Army Corps between them; the 1st Army had therefore to take over some three miles of front on its right, and the 3rd Army about the same distance on its left; the 4th Army taking part of the 3rd Army's right front with two Corps. The 9th French Corps was to proceed at once to the Verdun area, and the 33rd was to have a much-needed rest. This order, of course, necessitated very large movements of troops on the British front under most trying weather conditions. In the last fortnight the front

*The Germans attacked in massed formation.

held by four French Army Corps has been taken over by the British, and these Corps released for use in another part of the country. The weather is most unfavourable to large movements of troops.

February 28. The C.-in-C. called here to-day on his way to French G.H.Q.

February 29. The German advance at Verdun seems to have been stopped by the French. The 20th and 21st French Corps have probably been put into the battle; both are good Corps, well commanded and staffed. The C.-in-C. called here on his way back from Chantilly, and said that Joffre was satisfied with the situation. On the first day the French lost three entire divisions, killed and prisoners (36,000 men), and they think the German losses were at the most 15,000 men. But the subsequent days the Germans made sundry unsuccessful attacks which were very expensive to them.

March 6th. There has been a great deal of fierce fighting in the Verdun battle, the result of which has been satisfactory, as it has been very expensive to the enemy. The advance seems to have stopped, and the Higher Commands expect the Germans may attack elsewhere, at Soissons or in Champagne, now that so many reserves have been drawn down. In which case it may be necessary to draw pressure off the French by making some attacks (on a minor scale) but of course our striking strength has been absorbed by taking over the line held by 4 French Corps, and thus reducing our reserves. Divisions are proceeding from Egypt, but have not arrived yet.

The following notes received from the French. (These were furnished a little later, but for convenience are inserted here).

During the fortnight between 6th and 20th February the following Divisions were concentrated in the area immediately north of the sector attacked:

7th Reserve Army Corps (13th Reserve Division, 14th Reserve Division); 18th Army Corps (21st Division, 25th Division); 3rd Army Corps (5th Division, 6th Division); 15th Army Corps (30th Division, 39th Division); the Bavarian Ersatz Division, *i.e.*, three Divisions holding the sector from the Meuse to Fresnes, with nine Divisions in Reserve.

The Preparation. Several days before the attack the Regiments of the 5th Reserve Corps were withdrawn from the front line and relieved by the 8th Reserve Corps, 18th and 15th Corps. The attacking Corps were given the following sectors of attack from west to east:

7th R. Corps.	Meuse to Bois des Caures	7,500 yards.
18th ,,	Bois des Caures to Herbebois	6,600 ,,
3rd ,,	Herbebois to Maucourt	7,000 ,,
15th ,,	Maucourt to Warcq	14,000 ,,
5th Landwehr Div. and the Bavarian Ersatz Div.	Warcq to Fresnes	17,000 ,,
	Total front attack	51,000 ,,

Each Corps had both its Divisions in line side by side, each Division with two Brigades in front and one in reserve.

The Attack. On 21st February the Germans opened an intense artillery bombardment on the front opposite the 3rd and 18th Corps (Bois de Caures to Maucourt). During the night of 21st and 22nd these Corps sent forward strong patrols, each of two officers and 50 men to discover the result of the bombardment. On the 22nd February the attacks developed on the whole front from the Meuse to Herbebois, *i.e.*, on a front of 14,000 yards. The assault was preceded by a very intense but short bombardment on the whole of the sector of attack; the area subjected to the bombardment had a depth of 1,000 yards. Strong reconnoitring patrols were again pushed forward to ascertain the result of the bombardment. The assault was carried out by successive waves which followed each other at 80 to 100 yards distance. Some regiments were echeloned in depth by battalions, the leading battalion being in two lines. Each unit had a definitely assigned objective, beyond which it was not to advance. Further advance was to be carried out by the troops in reserve. The infantry was ordered not to persist in efforts to overcome any resistance which had not been broken down by artillery fire. Each unit was to await artillery support before continuing the attack. The leading principle seems to have been to obtain the maximum artillery effect with the minimum loss of infantry. The 22nd February was spent in endeavouring to reorganise the units which had become hopelessly mixed, and in relieving the regiments which had suffered most severely. In the course of this latter operation all the available reserves were used up. On 24th February the attack was resumed, but met with very heavy losses. The 13th Reserve Division and the 18th Corps, also 3rd Corps, together with the element attached to them, appear to have been completely worn out by this time. On the morning of the 24th the 15th Corps attempted to assault *en masse* on the Maucourt-Warcq front, but was driven back into its trenches with great loss by the barrage fire of the 75's. At 2 p.m. the 15th Corps renewed the attack in smaller groups, and in the evening succeeded in carrying the French front line. (The 15th Corps had been ordered not to attack until the road had been opened by the advance of the 3rd and 18th Corps.) On the 25th February the French withdrew their right flank from Warcq to the foot of the Côtes de la Meuse, at Fresnes. The 6th German Landwehr Division followed up this movement, but did not attempt to attack till the following day. On the 26th February there was heavy fighting about Douaumont in the centre, but very little either in the Meuse area or on the eastern flank. On 27th February the fighting in the Douaumont-Louvement sector became very intense, and the German units in this area suffered very heavy losses. On 28th February a lull took place in the fighting. The French consolidated themselves in their new line, and the Germans tried again to reorganise; on the eastern flank the 5th Landwehr Division, reinforced by the Bavarian Ersatz Division, delivered a series of attacks on the front Ronveaux-Manheulles without success. During the following days the 15th Corps, the 5th Landwehr Division and the Bavarian Ersatz Division again attacked the Côtes de Meuse and were repulsed with very considerable loss. The fighting then became less intense, and the first phase of the great battle might be considered to have closed.

¶Dick's letters home during these days of the early spring were necessarily fewer. The following are of this time (all written to his mother):

12th Feb. 1916.

. . .We are in quite a nice village about 18 miles from Calais. The house we live in belongs to an elderly lady who has been off her chump for 25 years. She lives in two rooms at the end of the house and is looked after by a companion, also elderly, who is very nice and civil and most obliging. There are some big open downs on one side of us, and you can ride for miles there without seeing a soldier or a bully beef tin, which is pleasant. There are about 12 of the staff here now, all particularly nice fellows except one who I am not sure about, but am told is first-rate at his job, which is all that matters. I like Lloyd very much, he seems a very nice fellow. He has lost part of the use of his right arm, but can write and use his knife and fork all right. Uncle Ted's boy gets no better I am sorry to say . . . the doctors have said he must resign his commission. It is really awfully sad. The General has been up to the Ypres trenches and got well shelled, in fact, was very lucky to escape. He took General Montgomerie, Chief of the Staff, with him, so we didn't go, and have been here all day. . . .

Querrieu, 25th Feb. 1916.

. . . Forgive a short scrawl, post is just off and my hands are so cold I can hardly feel the pencil. This will just about do for the great German offensive. What they must be suffering is awful to think. All leave is stopped for the moment, which is bad luck for Pippin and me. . . . I will write to-morrow. . . .

26th Feb. 1916.

. . . This time I hope my letter will be a little less hurried than last night. We are in quite a new part of the country, owing to the German offensive, . . . a very determined and well-planned attack, on a huge scale and with an enormous amount of ammunition and about 20 Infantry Divisions (400,000 men) on a 16-mile front. Of course an assault of this kind was bound to make ground, even though the French have known about it for at least three weeks previous to the commencement of the attack. But although they have gained as much ground, the enemy have taken only half the number of prisoners the French took in their offensive in Champagne. Of course it remains to be seen whether they will be able to get any further. This terrible weather is a great disadvantage to the Boches, and the hardships of their men must be awful, tens of thousands of men without any shelter whatever, not even a dug-out. We are in one of the coldest houses I was ever in, and even in a house with some fires I have never managed to get warm for a moment. General von Kluck lived here for a bit, early in the war, and his satellites have poked sticks through most of the pictures, and have torn down the woodwork in some places. But on the whole the house has not suffered much. . . .

29th Feb. 1916.

. . . I have been hoping and expecting to go on leave for the last six weeks, but have always been prevented, as we have twice moved. . . . The great battle of Verdun . . . . was a bold stroke on the Germans' part, well prepared and

carried out, but I hope now the danger is past, and the French Higher Commands are well pleased with the result. The first 24 hours of the battle were not satisfactory, the Germans made a good deal of ground, and the French did not inflict the casualties on them which they ought to have done. However, when the first German rush was over the French managed to get into them with their guns, which inflicted frightful losses. Although this attack on the Verdun salient had been expected for weeks, the German bombardment was so intense, and the infantry attacks so determined, that the French were swept off their legs a bit and lost heavily, including nearly 10,000 prisoners. Supports were, however, quickly moved up and the Germans got a fearful dressing down when they commenced the attack on the second line of defence, as they had advanced beyond the support of their heavy artillery. The French have been somewhat depressed lately, and I have no doubt the Germans hoped they might make a separate peace if Verdun was taken. This battle should certainly go towards shortening the war. The Germans put their six best Army Corps into the battle and these have been so severely mauled that they will not be any use for some months. The fact that the enemy are prepared to make such sacrifices and to risk bad weather for this offensive (which they have got . . .) in order to try and get an immediate decision, is the best sign we have had yet, for it shows that the German General Staff are very uneasy about the future—the immediate future, not the distant one. . . .

Dick's leave was given to him at last on 8th March—for a week. He was met with sad news, his friend Lord Desmond Fitzgerald had been killed the day before, and another intimate friend and connection, Frank Manners Sutton, had died very suddenly in London. Dick had been able to telegraph his arrival, and found his mother awaiting him at Benham, and his sister came from Aldeburgh to join the party. The frost still held and prevented hunting, but to be at home again was always happiness enough for Dick. He arrived with a very bad cold, influenza had been rife at Querrieu, so that it was welcome news to hear, when he went back to France, that he was to go to the Riviera with the Army Commander, who had himself been ill, and was ordered change and rest.

To his Mother:

Headquarters, 4th Army, B.E.F. 17th March, 1916.

. . . I got back last night to find the General, who has had influenza, has been ordered change of air, and is off to the Riviera this afternoon for a week and wants me with him. A bit of luck for me, and I hope now, with a week in the sun, I shall get rid of my cough. I hear leave is, or is about to be, allowed again, so I hope our Squax may soon be home. The General looks very C.D. indeed; I should not have thought influenza could have pulled him down so much in such a short time. . . .

¶To H.D.A.:

The Michelham Convalescent Home for British Officers, Cimiez, March, 1916.

My dearest Pam.—Fancy my being here. It does seem so funny, and reminds one so awfully of Santa Margherita. It is only about 90 miles, but it takes more than a day in the train; I wish I could have gone and seen L. Bird on his hill-top. The weather is not what it should be, chilly and not much sun. We went to Monte Carlo yesterday and then on to Mentone and the Italian frontier, so I looked into "cara Italia" for the first time for two and a half years. Nice is full of people and there seemed a good many at Monte Carlo too. There is a Princess Murat staying at the Michelhams' villa, where we went to luncheon, who wears bracelets of seed pearls round her legs, quite the latest fashion, I suppose adapted for these last new skirts. You would have laughed, the General shook with laughter. Lady Michelham is a stout lady of Semitic extraction, I should think, and by no means out of the top or even the second drawer, but very kind. This place, which contains about 150 officers, is awfully well done and entirely at the expense of the Michelhams. It is the "Grand Hotel" in peace time. My cough is better but not quite gone yet. My best love to Mother. Your loving Dick.

¶Philip Astley got his first leave on 27th March, after six months at the front.

H.Q., 4th Army, 31st March.

. . . I am so pleased our Squax has got leave at last; I expected he would as soon as it was open again. The General and I got back from Nice two days ago, both restored to health; but it was very trying to arrive back in a snowstorm after sitting under palm trees. We really had very good weather on the whole, we were there seven days and had five lovely days. They had been having vile weather for three weeks previously. We went for some very jolly trips on the mountains by car, taking our lunch with us. I enjoyed myself very much, as one really got right away from the war. . . . Lord K. paid a visit to the 4th Army yesterday, and had luncheon here; he seemed in very good form. We took him up a hill you can see the German lines from very well, and the weather was perfect for a view. . . . We were five hours in Paris on our way back, and I went to see the French trophies from the battle of Champagne at the Invalides, it was most interesting. . . .

¶Dick's War Diary is resumed on his return to Querrieu:

March 29. Preparations for "the day" have been continuing while we were away. The 8th Army Corps is now complete, formed of divisions from Egypt. The 3rd Corps (from 1st Army) was beginning to arrive. By the end of next week the 4th Army should contain some 260,000 men. Guns are continuing and will continue to arrive. The Intelligence department are puzzled to know what the Germans will do next. They once more attacked in the Verdun area with considerable forces, but were beaten off without any difficulty.

Translation of German documents which have recently been thrown into our trenches. "The German people have been gagged. This war is a war of

lies, and every nation shares in responsibility for it. They know how to lie, the German papers for whom lying has become a habit. At the outbreak of the war the German Socialists were convinced that it was being engineered by Austro-Hungarian capitalists. We held a dozen meetings here in Berlin to enter our protest. The paper 'Vorwärts' published strong articles; societies were founded to protest against the war; then came the censor and stopped us from any expression of our feeling. You do not understand the power of the German censor. In one day, in one hour, each one of us was segregated as if separated from all who thought as he did, isolated from his own thoughts, or else found himself submerged in the mighty torrent of the war fever. From the moment when the censor began to exercise his authority, all exchange of opinion became impossible, and every thinking German became an intellectual prisoner. But what is the point of the war? Before all, this is a war for the sake of conquest, and whatever may have been its reason, we are convinced of this, that the Imperial Government intends that it shall be a war of conquest. In Northern France and in Belgium valuable mines are to be found which will never be given back. The intention of the Government is to keep these mines at its own disposal. In just the same way the Government has worked the German people. I am a member of the Reichstag so am in a position to assure you that the Belgian ultimatum which was presented on the 2nd of August was not communicated to the Reichstag until the 5th. The papers without exception were filled with lies, for the sole purpose of rousing the German people against the enemies of Germany, and were full of stories of alleged atrocities committed by Belgians against German soldiers. The papers also told us that the Russians were barbarians, the Belgians superstitious pagans, and the English cowards. The causes of the war were so carefully veiled that the people really thought that Germany was not responsible for the war. We are powerless, the papers have woven a tissue of lies with regard to Belgium. 'With our blood we have paid for this province. The Belgians are nothing better than ill-bred brutes ruled by the clerical party with a rod of iron. Ignorant and superstitious are the people also, and therefore unworthy to own such a country.' In Germany this stupid jumble of ideas is accepted as Gospel truth, and we are not in a position to stem the tide. The paper 'Vorwärts' has frequently been confiscated, and in future can only appear under the strictest supervision, and on condition that it gives no news of the war. The Kaiser did not ask the permission of the Reichstag to declare war, he merely asked for money to carry it on. When the hour for peace comes, he will declare peace without consulting the Reichstag. We are powerless, we are sheep without a shepherd. There are two million Socialists in the Army. To address these or correspond with them is impossible. Each one stands alone."

April 7. The Germans raided the trenches of the 29th Division on the front of one sector. They killed 32, wounded 48, and took 14 prisoners back to their own lines. The method employed was this: They bombarded a front of 2,000 yards for two hours; the exact position which the raiders were to enter received an intensive bombardment. The bombardment, which was carried out

with great accuracy, was in the dark, and while it was going on the raiders left their own trenches and lay under our barbed-wire entanglements unobserved. At a given signal their guns lifted and the raiders rushed the few yards they had to go, before our men could get out of their dug-outs and man the parapet. In consequence they were killed or taken prisoners in their dug-outs, or just as they were trying to come out of them. It is a very interesting and difficult problem to know how best to prevent the future occurrence of these raids, which are both damaging to the *morale* of our troops, and raise that of the enemy. One idea is to evacuate the part of the trench bombarded and return to it at the end of the bombardment with a bombing party. But when such a large extent as 2,000 yards is bombarded, it would be dangerous to evacuate such a large bit of line and at the same time impossible to know where the raiders are likely to enter. Another suggestion is to push out strong patrols into the "No Man's Land" between the lines as soon as the bombardment of the trenches starts, to wait there to attack the raiding party as they come across. No definite decision as to the course to be adopted to prevent another raid has, as far as I know, yet been made. We have tried several raids of the same sort on the enemy, but the last two have been unsuccessful. One failed to get in at all; the other got in but found the trench empty. The causes of the failures were, I think, economy of ammunition. For in the first case the bombardment was not strong enough to break the enemy resistance; in the second, the front bombarded was too small, and in consequence could be evacuated with safety; the question is, of course, how much expenditure of ammunition is justified by the results hoped for.

¶ These raids were evidently exercising Dick's mind deeply, and perhaps, being absorbed in it, he wrote with less than his usual caution on the subject, for the next letter to his mother suffered some deletion at the censor's hands. The censor, however, would appear to have been over zealous, as full details of the raid were published in the official telegrams the following day.

H.Q., 4th Army, 6th April, 1916.

. . . We had a visit from Joffre yesterday, who stayed about half an hour. The Boches raided a bit of our trenches the other night (passage obliterated by the Censor) . . . they certainly are very plucky fighters (further obliteration). To my horror I found the French liaison officers busy netting our precious trout stream and, worse still, they had been at it for several days, so I am afraid we shall not do much good with the rod when the time comes. All the corn is growing up now, which is not so pleasant for riding about as it used to be. I saw two wild deer in the wood a few days ago. I am told there are wild boar also, but I have not seen one. We went up to the trenches to-day . . . it was most awfully quiet and peaceful, hardly a shot fired, and lovely hot sun. One gets splendid views of the lines from the tops of the hills here, it is so different from Flanders . . . I wonder if Claud will get a Brigade, I should think he is well worth one . . .

April 10. The Germans are again attacking in the Verdun area, west of the Meuse, but with very little result except loss to themselves. General Gough, who is staying here, went up to some of the observation posts on Peronne Avenue and beyond it. The Army Commander, General Montgomery, and myself went also. The view was good and we were able to see the rear of the German position behind Mametz very well. It was quite the quietest day I have ever known in the trenches. The lines were wrapped in deep silence and only very occasionally was a shot fired on either side. The weather was perfect.

April 12. Last night the Germans put a very heavy bombardment on to a section of the 8th Division trenches. It was estimated that they fired at least 6,000 shells. It was obvious the enemy were bombarding prior to a raid, and the Army Commander ordered our artillery to retaliate, regardless of ammunition. The German bombardment lasted 1½ hours, after which all was quiet. It was reported this morning that the enemy had entered our trenches on the sector they had bombarded, had killed a considerable number of men, and that over 20 were missing. The whole thing was especially annoying as the enemy have thus been able to identify the presence of the 8th Division, which had only just arrived from the 1st Army. When the ammunition returns came in this evening they disclosed that the 8th Divisional Artillery had only fired 150 rounds. Either the order of the Army Commander had been neglected or had never reached the artillery. In any case the artillery must have been entirely out of touch with the infantry, and both slow and slack. Now that probably the three best of the Artillery Generals have come to this Army to the 8th, 10th and 13th Corps, all this will no doubt be rectified, but at present the Germans seem to enter our trenches and take prisoners whenever they like, and with very little loss to themselves. This front has been so long quiet that the gunners have had no practice in quick co-ordination with the infantry, or of opening fire quickly and in any volume.

April 13. The Germans again raided last night, on the 13th Corps' front, but this time with rather less success. Some German dead were found in our trench and in front of it; some of our men were missing. The guns (ours) this time fired 600 rounds, which showed improvement, but was far from good. I am sure the best thing to do when a raid is expected is to evacuate the front line which is subjected to bombardment, and return to it with a bombing party about 15 minutes after the bombardment ceases. In this case either the enemy would enter the trench, find it empty and retire again, or would remain in it and be attacked by the bombing parties. A heavy artillery fire should be kept up all the time on the enemy's trenches, especially his support line. It is quite time a definite plan of action was come to on the subject; perhaps it has been, but I have not heard what it is. Sir Henry told me to-day that he had had a letter from the C.I.G.S. (Sir W. Robertson), who said that there was now very little chance of saving General Townshend and the Kut force. It is very sad as it will raise the *morale* of the Turks and be very serious for our prestige in India, but on the whole probably better than sacrificing a lot of lives to relieve them, which at best can only be a gamble.

The following information has been received from the French about the examination of prisoners taken near Verdun. "The *morale* of the men of the 3rd Bavarian Regiment and of the 13th Bavarian Reserve Regiment seems to have altered rapidly since the arrival of the 11th Bavarian Division on the Western front. The men just returned from Servia, where the campaign after the first assault was nothing but a military procession, talked of nothing less than devouring the French. The conquerors of Russia and Servia would just make a mouthful of the 'Frangman.' They imagined (so the prisoners said) that it was the same in France as in the East. In Servia they pursued the enemy without being able to gain touch with him. It was like a hare-hunt (es war die reinste Häsenjagd), everyone fled before the conqueror. 'In Russia no artillery, a few shells here and there, an occasional assault, but victories without end, always ground gained, always advancing; the Frenchmen would soon see, etc.' Such more or less was the spirit of the 11th Bavarian Division on its return from the Eastern theatre, according to prisoners. From the first day's fighting on this part the *morale* sank and the men became discouraged. Under the heavy artillery fire they bent and crumpled. One officer went mad (a lieutenant of 10th Company, 3rd Bavarian Division). . . . Examined as to the scarcity of food, the Bavarians assert that their people can still live by stinting themselves."

April 16. Ammunition. The Army Commander said to-day that the ammunition supply was becoming quite satisfactory. We have saved over a quarter of a million 18-pounder shells since the beginning of the month. There are six million shells in England only waiting to be finished off, and the supply in a month's time should be almost limitless. Heavy guns are arriving now very fast.

Aeroplanes. We have now three squadrons of fighting machines in this Army in addition to the squadron with each Corps for artillery purposes.

Raids. Several raids are being planned by the respective Divisional Generals for the near future. I am very doubtful whether they will meet with nearly as much success as the Germans have had with theirs, because the German artillery is more alert than ours and will probably put on a very effective curtain fire at once. However, this remains to be seen.

Intelligence. The 22nd Division has arrived from Russia, and has gone to the Verdun area, and is expected to relieve the 22nd Reserve Division there. The 1st Division has also arrived on the Western front from Russia, but has not been put into the line yet. The Alpine Corps from the Balkans is in process of arriving in Belgium. Among other divisions lately arrived on this front is the 105th, which took part in the Balkan campaign, and afterwards was stationed on the Rumanian frontier. It was relieved there in March by Bulgarian troops and then came to the Western front. The 3rd and 6th heavy batteries arrived at Ans (north-west of Liege) from the Russian front; their exact position at the moment is not known. The 8th Corps, which has recently been relieved by the 27th Reserve Corps, is resting at Tournai.

April 18. Verdun. The Germans attacked there once more yesterday on a 4-mile front in the Douaumont sector. No less than five divisions were

employed. Very little was gained according to the French, but some sectors of trench were undoubtedly lost. The exact situation remains obscure. The enemy have no more unused divisions there now, a lull in the fighting must therefore ensue until more have been brought from elsewhere, or those which are there are rested.

April 24. Raid by the 17th Battalion, H.L.I. A successful raid was carried out last night by the 17th Battalion of the Highland Light Infantry. The German trenches were bombarded on a front of 1,500 yards for over an hour; and at 10 p.m. the raiding party of 25 men entered the German front line trench. The Germans, they found, were still in their dug-outs to escape the bombardment. These dug-outs were the mine variety, going down nearly 20 feet. They took prisoner the occupants of the first three dug-outs without any difficulty, 13 in number. But those in the subsequent ones did not surrender as promptly as the others, and were accordingly shot or bombed, as the raiding party was too small to delay in wasting words. Six men were shot in one dug-out with a revolver, and several dug-outs full of Germans had bombs thrown into them. Exclusive of the 13 prisoners, the Germans must have had about 40 men killed by the raiders in addition to the casualties caused by the bombardment. Our casualties were three, so the whole little affair was very successful.

Russians in France. So far one brigade has arrived in France. A division is coming altogether. They are unarmed but fairly well trained. They are to be armed with French rifles, and their artillery will be French. One division has, of course, only slight military value on a front where some 250 divisions are engaged. But we are told it has been done for political reasons, to hearten the French.

April 28. Verdun. A small attack directed on the French trenches north of Vaux was easily repulsed yesterday. Later in the day two more attacks were made, one against the French position, Haudiomont farm, Thiaumont farm (south-west of Douaumont Fort); the other between Douaumont and Vaux. Both attacks were stopped by the French barrage from their 75's. An intense artillery bombardment is reported on the area Avocourt-Esnes-Cumières. A prisoner of the 6th Division (3rd Corps) was captured on 26th April south of Douaumont Fort. The 3rd Corps, after having been repeatedly withdrawn from the fighting, re-established with fresh drafts and put in again, was sent to rest in Alsace towards the end of March. The 6th Division entrained at Mülhausen on 22nd April, and has returned to the Verdun front. The prisoner states that 60 per cent. of his company are new drafts of the 1916 class. I went with Sir Henry to stay the night with the 4th Corps. They are in the Souchez sector of the line, recently taken off the French when the 10th Army was sent to Verdun. The Germans on the 4th Corps front are very active, and are continually shooting away great quantities of ammunition. They think nothing of firing 600 (5.9) shells at a single battery. They shoot more than twice as much daily as our gunners are allowed to use. What is perhaps more distressing still is that 60 per cent. of our heavy shells are now failing to burst, and therefore a pure waste of time shooting. In the 4th Army we have not been

finding nearly such a large percentage of failures. It is feared that the Munitions Department is sacrificing quality to quantity, so as to have large figures of production to show the House of Commons.

April 30. The 29th Division are preparing a double raid on the German trenches to be carried out to-night.

May 1. Both raids failed. Partly through bad organisation on the part of the Brigadiers, I gather, the parties started five minutes late. I am inclined to think the guns did not carry out their task efficiently. If the guns really carry out their programme efficiently and punctually no raid should fail. The Division lost 127 men from the raiding parties, and men killed in the trenches by German shell fire. The German gunner is certainly very good and his guns are most accurate, which is, of course, essential for night shooting.

May 2. News from the French. Colonel Cavendish, Chief of the British Mission at G.H.Q., arrived here this evening to stay till to-morrow. He seems most optimistic, and says the French are more so than he is, and expect the war to finish this summer. They are very pleased with themselves about Verdun, and say they now have the mastery over the enemy, both with their artillery and in the air. They say the German 1916 class of recruit is very poor, and that the French 1916 class (which is still at the depôts) is the best lot of men they have had. They do not think the Germans will stand up to the French infantry in another great battle. The Germans have commenced to move some of their heavy guns from Verdun and the French expect them to mass them in front of Rheims, and try and deliver a spectacular attack there. All the above does not quite correspond with what one notices about the Germans, anyhow on this front. Their artillery, although there is less of it, makes very much more accurate shooting than ours, and their ammunition seems quite limitless, although they are shooting enormous quantities at Verdun and other parts of their long fronts. They think nothing of using six to seven thousand shells to carry out one small raid, or of firing 700 shells at one of our batteries which may have been annoying them, in the space of 20 minutes or less.

¶On 3rd May there is no entry in the War Diary, but the following letter to his mother on topics that afforded some passing distraction from the anxieties of war:

3rd May, 1916.

. . . The owners of the house came to pay their property a visit to-day and seemed pleased that we are trying to keep it nice. I am sorry the seeds I have planted in the garden were not in flower to help the place look more cheerful. It is quite delightful by the Somme, a mass of small lakes and streams all down the valley; there seem to be a lot of coarse fish, but I doubt if there are very many trout. Someone saw one rise in the stream a few days ago, but I should think they are scarce. I am very glad Pippin wasn't in Dublin, he is far safer here at the moment, I am told a lot more officers were killed there than has been published. I expect Brinsop is looking very pretty with all the bluebells out in the woods. . . .

May 4. The 1st (German) Guards Reserve Division has turned up opposite a portion of our front. The Germans may have noticed the activity behind the lines on this Army front, or may possibly be meditating a small offensive, but I think the latter most unlikely.

May 6. The 3rd Guards Division has arrived on the Western front and gone to Champagne. Its place on the Russian front has been taken by the 32nd Austrian Division. (Reported through the I.D.)

May 7. The following report from a pilot in the 4th R.F.C. Brigade is of interest.... "I saw a hostile machine (type A) flying south at about 1,500 feet between Hem and Clery. I dived down and overtook him south-east of Clery, he saw me, and turning, dived down to avoid me. After chasing him round and gradually getting closer, I got within 50 yards of him, the observer was firing wildly over his tail. I fired about a quarter of a drum (10 shots) and he immediately dived and endeavoured to land across the wind. Hitting a wire fence, his right bottom plane was ripped off by a post, and the whole machine swung round, hitting another post, which bent back the left-hand wings. The whole machine swung round again, taking the under-carriage off. I then climbed to 200 feet, and turning round, dived, firing the remains of my drum (40 rounds) at the pilot and observer, who were running across the field. I hit one of them, who staggered and fell, the other took refuge in a shed near by. Meanwhile my thumb switch had stuck, and so, being unable to switch on my engine again, I was forced to land, but in doing so the bump loosened the spring, and so started the engines. I was thus able to leave the ground again, and climbing 500 feet, came back along the valley of the Somme, reaching our lines in safety."

May 14. The general situation on the British front. The enemy have been active lately in a small way all along the front held by the British. Trench raids have been continued, the artillery very active, and at the Hohenzollern Redoubt they delivered an attack on a larger scale and took from us 500 yards of trenches and nearly 100 prisoners. Last night they attempted an attack on this Army near Mametz. It was only a small affair and did not succeed. The German artillery is shooting with great accuracy, and has apparently limitless ammunition. Taking it all round in the daily routine of trench warfare, the Bosch is doing a little better than we are.

The Fourth Army Front. The country on the 4th Army front is rather similar to Salisbury Plain, but instead of grass it is under cultivation. There are numerous villages situated in the hollows, and a good many woods for country of this kind. There are two rivers which pass from the German territory to ours, the Ancre, a stream about the size of the Avon at Amesbury, and the Somme; the latter is on the extreme right of the British line, and forms our boundary with the French. It flows through a marshy valley about a mile broad, in which there can be no trenches, owing to the water. This is held by small posts, which at times have hand-to-hand encounters with the enemy.

The enemy's positions are as strong as experience, energy and ceaseless labour can possibly make them. They may be divided into three complete systems of

defence, the second two miles behind the first, and the third four miles behind the second. The first two systems are stronger than the third, which is still not so complete; they consist of several lines of trenches each, with redoubts, strong points, machine-gun emplacements, etc. The soil is chalk and therefore suitable for the deep 20 foot dug-outs at the making of which the German is such an expert. The barbed wire entanglements are both thick and wide, in places 30 yards in width. The woods are full of barbed wire entanglements and concealed machine-guns. At times one feels in despair that an attack on such a fortress can ever possibly succeed, and I cannot say I view the task in front of us with very great optimism. The preparation and organisation necessary before such an operation can be attempted is stupendous.

New Inventions. These things we hope, however, will be of enormous assistance to the vast undertaking in prospect. They are (1) Wireless telephones; (2) The "Stokes" trench gun; (3) Flares.

The first is one of the most wonderful inventions of the war, and by means of it the aviators can converse with the artillery. The second is a gun, light enough to be carried easily by one man, which fires 11 lb. high-explosive shells at the rate of 30 a minute to a distance of 1,000 yards. These guns will be of great service in an attack, as a concentrated fire can be kept up on the enemy trenches until our infantry are within 30 yards, without risk to our own men. The Germans will have very little time to get out of their deep dug-outs and man their trenches before our infantry are upon them, as it will be certain death to leave their dug-outs while our trench guns are shooting on to their trenches. The flares, which are about the size of a night light, will be carried by each N.C.O. and officer; they will be lit at given hours by the infantry that have advanced furthest. The line reached will thus be evident to the aeroplanes, and also the parts of the line that are held up will be seen, and communicated at once to the artillery and the generals concerned. This should obviate a good many of the muddles that have occurred in the past through some part of an attack getting held up, and other regiments getting on too far, and afterwards being cut off. The aeroplanes will be able to telephone to the artillery the exact position of their infantry, and so avoid the too frequent casualties from our own guns.

German Strengths. The Germans on the Western front are very strong, having no less than 122½ divisions (a division is about 20,000 men). On the Russian front they have only 40 divisions, so the Franco-British forces are fighting three-fourths of the whole German Army. Forty divisions is a quite inadequate force to hold the Russians this summer if they are any good, and have any organisation. Both these things are doubtful, and as war has now become a business concern and depends more on machinery and organisation than on the bravery of the individual man, the Bosches may once again prove their superiority over them. If, however, both sides can attack them simultaneously, each on a wide front, as it is intended to do, a collapse is more than likely. The preparations of the French are still rather retarded by the enemy continuing to

attack at Verdun, the French in consequence being nervous of moving away too many of their guns from there. The enemy is no doubt doing this to delay and, if possible, ruin the French plans.

Strength of the 4th Army is now five Army Corps with a total of 319,000 men, with 1,500 guns of all sizes, including numerous batteries of siege howitzers. The 4th Army front is only twelve miles, there are therefore 14 men to every yard of front. It would be impossible to feed and munition more troops than are at present in this area with real efficiency. Training is being carried on very extensively, as only a small portion of this number of men are required in the trenches at present.

It is hardly to be wondered at that the letters of this period are short and few. Dick had one more brief spell of leave before the great offensive of the summer opened.

12th May, 1916.

. . . I am afraid I have been bad at letter-writing lately, but I hope to improve from now as the military secretary comes back to-day. He has been on sick leave for a month, and I have been doing his work while he has been away, which kept me pretty busy; as I still went out with the General in the afternoon, I had a good bit to do in the mornings and evenings. It is very difficult to find anything to say, one's letters must be either dull or indiscreet, and I was alarmed by your saying the censor had scratched some of my letter out the other day; I am sure it could have been nothing worth scratching out. . . . I saw a Mayfly on our stream to-day, but I only saw one trout rise. However I think we may get a few. . . . I bought a postcard of this house, which will interest you. . . . I hear from Jack that the Reserve Regiment are in camp at Windsor Park. Not so nice as Laverstoke, I should think. The hospital at Benham is to be opened again on 1st June for the summer. . . .

16th-17th May, 1916.

. . . The General talks of going for leave very soon, but has not fixed a day yet. I suppose when he does go, he will go at half an hour's notice. I don't quite know whether I shall go or not; it is Lloyd's turn and he will go in any case, but I hope he may take us both. . . . I fear he will only be able to be away five or six days, so as I must be one day in London I am afraid I won't get to Brinsop, although I want to see what you have done on the west of the house badly. . . . I do hope you will be able to come to Benham. . . . I will send you a wire when I am coming, and will look forward to seeing you and Pam most awfully. I am afraid I shall be a week too early for the Mayfly, unless it is early. I hope I shall be at home soon after you get this. . . .

Dick arrived in London on the 20th May and was able to remain for eight days, and although much of this time was given up of necessity to troublesome business connected with the estate, he contrived, as usual, to see many of his friends, and the Mayfly appeared in time to give him some fishing. And his mother was at Benham

to meet him, and was with him until he went back. He writes to her, again from Querrieu:

4th June, 1916.

. . . We had a splendid week, didn't we? I felt rather unsettled when I got back to this exile, which is the only word for it, even though I have no discomfort or danger. The Composite Household Cavalry Regiment is not going to be formed. Sir D. H. sat on it, as Sir Henry told me would probably be the case, and the 14th Corps Cavalry will be formed by three Yeomanry squadrons instead. So I shall be here for the present. What do you think of the naval battle? The first thing we knew of it was that our wireless station here picked up the Kaiser's congratulatory message to his fleet, which was rather unpleasant. We are having a dinner for the Etonians of the 4th Army this evening, over 167 are coming, a lot of old friends of mine, among them Geoffrey Barclay. I hope it will be a success, but we have not had much time to arrange it. . . .

¶This old Etonian dinner was given at Amiens and, thanks to Dick's management, went off extremely well. He was responsible for all the arrangements, both this time and in the following year, when the dinner took place at Peronne, and contrived, even under war conditions, to provide excellent food, wine and music, and to arrange transport for some of those who came from a distance. Further, Dick himself made good all the damage done on these festive occasions, when, after the toasts had been drunk, most of the wine glasses were broken, as in old days.

¶Preparations were well advanced for the next offensive of the Allies, the British on the Somme, the French on their right, to the south. Dick evidently had this in mind when he wrote the next letter, but in deference to the Censor, he makes no open allusion to the subject, although it was more or less known already in England.

¶To his Mother:

June, 1916.

. . . How I wish I was at Ufford with you instead of this place. It really seems sometimes one is here for life. But I really think things are going quite well, and the Bosche will be in a tight place before the summer is over. I am afraid it is some time since I wrote, and it may be a good long time before I shall have time to write again as things are *busy*. I am very pleased to hear Pippin did not go into the trenches.*. . . We are giving the Boches a good shelling, as you will have seen in the papers. I went up to our support trenches to watch yesterday morning, it is very satisfactory to see the heavy crumps going

* Philip had arrived at home on leave on June 7th only to find a telegram of recall awaiting him, and had to go back within a few hours.

on to the Boches; I hoped they liked it. They have not retaliated very much; I think the bulk of their heavy artillery is at Verdun. What is Brookie's new library like? very nice, I expect; it wasn't finished when I was there. The hospital at Benham has not opened again yet, as they say they don't want it. But I have given them six weeks more to make up their minds, which I certainly expect they will change....

¶To H.D.A.:

16th June, 1916.

...I am so pleased to hear our Squax has got some leave: you must be enchanted, as I expect it was a surprise too. Mother said he was expecting to go into the trenches at Ypres, the idea of which I did not much like. I made enquiries and hear they are not likely to be used unless something unforeseen occurs. I hear from Charlie Mylius that the "Oleander" and her gun brought down two Austrian aeroplanes.... What an eventful week we have had with the naval battle, poor Lord K.'s death and the Russian victories. The naval battle seems to have been a fine victory as the Germans seem to have been hunted off the sea when our battle fleet came up. The losses in killed are dreadful, aren't they? but I suppose we must expect that....

21st June, 1916.

...There is not much news I can tell you from here I am afraid... You saw in the paper, I suppose, that John Astor, who was Captain of my Squadron when I was with the Regiment, is engaged to be married. I don't know his fiancée, but I am told she is very nice; I hope so, I like him so much. You will hardly believe it but a yellowhammer nested and reared its brood between the sandbags of the emplacement of one of our big guns; no matter how much the gun was fired it never moved, although only six feet from the muzzle. The noise, of course, is terrific, and the concussion has broken all the glass in the windows of a cottage close by. No one who has not seen it would believe such a thing possible; it might interest the readers of your Avicultural Magazine*...

¶The War Diary describes in detail the careful and intricate preparations now nearly completed:

The organisation and preparation necessary before a great attack is launched is beyond all belief, quite apart from the training of the troops and the ranging of the guns. This country is not very well watered and, except for the two rivers, wells are the only source of supply; in consequence the watering of between a quarter and half a million men on a front of 12 miles is a serious problem. Pumping stations have been constructed by the rivers, and some 55 miles of water pipes laid down to supply numerous reservoirs. Pumps are being put together and water pipes prepared to lay the water on to the country that lies ahead of us as soon as we should get possession of it. Two ordinary railways have been built to facilitate the bringing up of great quantities of ammunition rapidly, and over 45 miles of light metre-gauge railways are under construction. Each battery has to have its observation officer right forward where he can see, and

* A journal of which H.D.A. was editor.

this means a telephone 1½ or 2 miles long from the observation post to the battery. In order to prevent them from being cut by the hostile artillery, the wires have to be buried some five feet below the ground . . . the wire-laying for this Army area represents an enormous amount of labour. . . . Many of the more important batteries have several alternative observation posts, in case one should become untenable. As guns two miles from the line, often behind a hill or wood, are rendered useless if their forward observer is killed or their telephone wire cut, this is very important. . . . Guns without a forward observer directing their fire are like blind men, and if they continue shooting are very apt to shell their own infantry.

Artillery Preparation for an Attack. Each battery *must* have a specific object assigned to it, which is its sole business to carry out during the bombardment. The giving of these individual tasks to 400 different batteries needs . . . great thought and considerable organisation. The places in the enemy's line which are likely to prove the greatest obstacles to the advance of our infantry must receive particular attention. The enemy is continually making fresh works and putting up more wire, which does not tend to make this task easier. As more guns are massed, so also the enemy improves his defences.

Duration of the Bombardment before Attack. (1) The short six or twelve hour intensive bombardment, which is carried out by all available guns, firing as fast as the men can load and fire them, often takes the enemy by surprise and gives him very little time to bring up his reserves of men and artillery. The noise, concussion and hurricane of such a bombardment shakes the nerves and *morale* of the defenders of a position. The principal objection to this is that it does not thoroughly destroy the enemy's defences. Owing to the dust and smoke caused by so many shells bursting at once, it is impossible to observe the results of the shooting properly and to correct errors accordingly. When there is a scarcity of ammunition this kind of bombardment is, of course, necessary. The long bombardment needs a great deal of ammunition. It is spread over several days, and each shell is fired more or less deliberately and is fairly accurately observed. In consequence the enemy defences are more completely destroyed and the barbed wire entanglements are better cut. Barrages are kept up night and day on the enemy's communication trenches and roads, and thus it is made very difficult for him to bring up rations and ammunition. The enemy suffers from continual strain of being bombarded through a period of several days, and very little food and water has, in all probability, been able to reach him, which tends to depress his *morale* lower still. All bombardments, I am convinced, should be terminated by at least half an hour of rapid hurricane bombardment by all available guns, and as the guns lift on to the support line the infantry assault should be delivered. The great disadvantage of a long bombardment over a short one is that it gives the enemy time to concentrate men and guns to resist the attack which is obviously about to be delivered. (He has four or five days during the bombardment to prepare for an attack against him.) He can occupy his back lines with reserves if he has them available, and he can dig more trenches just out of range of the bombarding guns. The French carried out a long

bombardment before their great September attack in Champagne. The attack succeeded in taking all the defences which had previously been destroyed by the bombardment, but failed against the third German line which had escaped the bombardment, and which the Germans had succeeded in manning with their reserves. The Germans chose the short hurricane bombardment as a preparation for their attack on Verdun. They succeeded in taking the ground which had been bombarded, equally or more easily. But their attack broke when they advanced on to the next line, held by strong French reserves, which had not been subjected to an intense artillery bombardment.

Offence and Defence compared. While the attackers are advancing over ground previously prepared by their artillery, who for weeks have organised the bombardment, made splendid shell-proof emplacements for their guns, laid telephones from the batteries to the observation posts, etc., etc., the advantage lies with the attackers, who, when an attack is on a large scale, are invariably successful on the first day. But when the ground which has been prepared by the guns is won, and those guns have to move forward from their carefully prepared positions, in order to support the infantry in an attack on the second position of the enemy, the scales are turned tenfold in favour of the defenders. This time the guns of the attackers have no buried telephone wires, no shell-proof gun emplacements, no previous practice on their targets. The defender, on the other hand, retires to ground he knows every inch of. He has gun-pits and observing stations and telephone wires all ready laid. The artillery, which on the first day of the battle was a splendid working machine, is a very different thing on the second. The conditions of the infantry are less good still, and are probably little better than chaos. The men who may have, perhaps, advanced some mile and a half are exhausted; in many regiments the senior officers will have been killed, and the juniors who have taken command will probably not know what to do. One regiment will often be muddled up with another, and lose touch with the regiment on its right or left. Everything is, in fact, in a state of disorganisation. *This* is the moment for the defenders to counter-attack. *This* is the time for the guns of the defenders, who have moved back into prepared positions (where telephones have been ready laid), to seize their opportunity of dealing out death. And this they have done in all the great battles of the war. So the Germans did at Loos and in Champagne, so the French have done to them at Verdun. It is not the first position that is difficult to take. With careful preparation and enough guns the taking of it is a certainty. The crisis and the decision lie in the second and third lines, the *capture* of which means a great victory; the failure to do so means terrible losses and defeat—months of preparation and organisation, millions of shells, and tens of thousands of splendid lives wasted, for the gain of a few thousand acres of desert land. If, however, all the defenders' lines are pierced on a wide front, the first phase of a decisive battle has been accomplished, and the attacker has an opportunity of attacking the defenders on one or other of the flanks which have been formed by the breach in the line already made. The attacker will require large fresh forces . . . with which to destroy the field army of the enemy and prevent his

successful withdrawal from those parts of the line which have not been attacked. Should the enemy lines of defence be pierced, but the attackers have no fresh troops in hand with which to press home their victory . . . it is probable that the enemy would be able to dig a new line of trenches, or at any rate succeed in withdrawing his guns and army to another line some miles in the rear. The aim of all great offensives is not the piercing of the line or capture of a town: these are only means to an end. The real object is to fight a decision and destroy the field army of your enemy.

June 7. The last ten days have been full of event. The Germans have ceaselessly continued their attacks on the Verdun front, with a view, no doubt, to hindering the French in their preparations for a great summer offensive. This, of course, they succeeded in doing, but considering the hard fighting that is going on at Verdun, the French preparations are getting on well and quickly. Our own preparations are proceeding satisfactorily, and we shall no doubt be ready before the French. The enemy are uncertain and nervous about the British Army; they have more troops on the British front than on any part of either front except Verdun. They are showing considerable activity, and have made two medium-sized attacks, one at Ypres, and the other in Artois, doubtless with the attention of, if possible, disarranging our plans. Both these attacks have had quite considerable success. They were preceded by a very heavy bombardment, and inflicted on us a good many casualties.

The Naval Battle came as a great surprise to everyone. It is difficult to see why the German Fleet should have come out, unless it was to give battle, in which case why did they break off and return to port when they were doing quite well. . . . Everyone agrees that it is a sign of distress on the part of Germany that her fleet should come out.

Lord Kitchener's death in the performance of his duty is sad news. Viewed solely from the point of the conduct of the war it is of no importance. For some months he had ceased to play an important part . . . in fact since the formation of a strong Imperial General Staff, with Sir William Robertson as C.I.G.S. Whatever his subsequent mistakes may have been, it is to Lord K. we owe our splendid Continental Army, more than 20 Army Corps, with over 4,000 guns. For he was the only man at the commencement who realised that such a great force would be necessary to avoid defeat, let alone win this war. For his name in history, his sudden end, coming as it did when he had finished his work, was perhaps the best.

The Russian news of the last three days is excellent. Their offensive started on Monday and on Wednesday the capture of 41,000 Austrian prisoners is announced. The removal of 16 of the best Austrian Divisions to attack Italy left the Galician front very weak and gave the Russians an excellent chance for a successful offensive, which opportunity they have not let pass. It is not clear, however, if they have succeeded in penetrating all the Austrian systems of defence on that part of the front. By the plans of the Allied General Staffs they are to attack the Germans with all their available strength at the same moment that we and the French do. It is to be hoped they are not using up all their

ammunition now in their offensive against the Austrians, and will have enough left for driving home a great offensive on the Germans simultaneously with us.

June 9. The Russian news remains excellent, 51,000 Austrian prisoners are now announced, and we hear from French G.H.Q. that they have advanced 25 miles on a front of 50 miles. If this is correct it means that the Austrian defences are pierced, and that the enemy are forced to fight in the open on that part of the front. It should also be possible to use cavalry to great advantage, and the number of prisoners should increase quickly. There is no better sign of the success of an offensive than the daily announcement of large hauls of prisoners. If the offensive is developing with success the daily number should rapidly increase. It is a sign that an offensive has failed if a large number of prisoners is captured on the first day, and only a few on the subsequent days. This was the case in Champagne and at Verdun; also in our smaller offensives at Neuve Chapelle and Loos.

June 10. 64,700 prisoners are now announced from Russia, and fighting is evidently proceeding in the open.

June 11. The Russian news continues good, a total of 71,000 prisoners is announced, and the offensive progresses. The Army Commander was at G.H.Q. to-day, and was told there that the Russians had so far used no heavy guns, and that this is merely a preliminary offensive. If this is the case the prospects of the summer campaign on the Eastern front are very good indeed. Preparations for our attack are being hurried on with all speed. The first consignment of ammunition allotted to the 4th Army for the coming operations has arrived at our rail-heads. Ten thousand tons. We still continue to have rainy weather which hinders work and plays hell with the roads. All the ammunition has to be taken in lorries from the rail-heads to the batteries. The damage done to these roads when they are sodden is very great.

June 12. 35,000 more prisoners are announced by the Russians, making the enormous total of 107,000.

Verdun. The situation there is rather critical. The Germans have been furiously bombarding it for seven days, and this evening have attacked again with only slight success. The French troops there are very tired, and the German bombardments are fearful. The loss of Verdun is nothing, but it is imperative for the whole great scheme of the Allies that it should not fall until our great attack has been launched. The enemy have the bulk of their reserves and heavy guns there, and it is vital that they should still be there when we attack. Every day we postpone our attack we are increasing in strength. But it would pay us to attack even before the full preparations are finished, than that by delay Verdun should fall and release the bulk of the German Army. If the Germans capture Verdun 12 hours after we have attacked all will be well, and it is possible they might be unable to avert a débâcle. Verdun is worth nothing. But that the bulk of the German forces should be at Verdun on the day we attack is worth everything and more than everything. Our preparations are to be hurried on with the greatest speed, also those of the French armies which are to attack south of the Somme.

June 14. The Germans have made several more attacks on the Verdun front in the last few days, but have been repulsed. We have still 250 heavy guns to get up and into position. Our assembly trenches should be ready by the 25th. More than 80 per cent. of the necessary labour has been done. Some of the guns which arrive last may not have proper gun pits and protection prepared before the battle. The amount of ammunition to be dumped at the gun position for the bombardment is 40,000 tons. 10,000 tons has already been dumped and the work continues steadily each night. Some of the heavy gun ammunition has not arrived, it is indeed to be hoped it will. . . . Indeed I should think Sir H. would refuse to attack without it, as the whole of the artillery programme would have to be altered.

June 17. The Russian armies of the south have now taken 166,000 prisoners and seem to be continuing their advance. To-day, in accordance with the general scheme, their great attack on the Germans in front of Minsk commences. It is to be delivered on a 25 mile front, with a force of 42 divisions (about 840,000 men) supported by all their heavy artillery, none of which was used in their recent offensive against the Austrians. The Germans should certainly receive a very heavy blow, but we cannot expect such results as have been obtained against the Austrians. The Germans are unluckily very different kind of stuff, and Hindenburg is a very able commander. He has, however, only the absolute minimum of men it is possible to hold the line there with at his disposal. One Corps has left this front within the last few days for Russia. It is a pity we and the French were not ready to attack to-day too, but if we are able to commence within three weeks they will not be able to use troops first on one side and then on the other. On the 4th Army front the enemy have done less shelling than they have done for months, in spite of the great amount of traffic on the roads. This is very curious. No German aeroplanes are ever to be seen either.

June 18. A large number of German aeroplanes came over this morning, of which three were brought down, one not very far from here. The pilot, in course of conversation, said that they (the Germans) had realised suddenly that we were preparing an attack, and that many reconnaissances had been ordered in consequence. How it is they have not smelt a rat before I cannot understand, as the roads are a mass of traffic. It shows their Intelligence Department is much less good than ours. The enemy are working very hard on improving their second and third lines, and putting up more barbed wire. The sooner we can be ready and start the better. It is hoped we may do so at the end of the month. We have no news yet of the great Russian offensive against Hindenburg. The Germans have jammed the Russian Wireless. It is possible, of course, that it may have been postponed a day or two. Had the attack been made and repulsed we should no doubt have heard of it from the Germans who are very quick to trumpet their successes. The heavy ammunition for our siege howitzers is arriving slowly. I trust we shall get the amount we were promised.

June 20. The heavy howitzer ammunition is arriving satisfactorily, and it is hoped that we shall be able to commence the bombardment at the end of the week, if the French are ready also. The sooner the operations start the better

so as to give the enemy the least possible time to mass guns and reserves in front of us. At present he has only three divisions in the line and two in reserve. The two latter are resting at Cambrai after a very hard time at Verdun.

Verdun. There have been no infantry attacks there the last two days, and less artillery fire. It is probable that the Germans realise it is hopeless, and are turning to face the dangers that beset them elsewhere. The question is, have they realised this fact too late? We must hope it is so.

[Enclosed in the Diary at this point is the Summary of Reports received on 20th June, giving details of repairs to railways and other preparations for a possible retreat, observed from the air behind the German lines, also the evacuation of the indigent civil population, and the exaction of forced labour from the able-bodied in the occupied districts, which appears to have been very heavy at Marcoing and Cambrai.

June 21. I went round the heavy artillery of the 3rd Corps this afternoon. Nearly all the ammunition allotted for the four days' bombardment is now dumped satisfactorily. Some batteries have still about 200 more shells to receive, which they will get to-night. The guns are nearly all well concealed and protected, except the last arrivals, which are well concealed, but not yet protected. There has not been time to dig gun pits and put up head cover. A 9.2 siege battery was particularly well concealed, having a dummy haystack round each gun, with a trap door in the top through which the muzzle of the gun comes when it is fired.

June 23. A somewhat anxious day. General Foch came to see the Army Commander and wished him to postpone the day of assault as the French were not quite ready. Sir Henry was very much averse to this, as each day the German is strengthening his lines. He must by now have discovered that we mean to attack, in fact we know he has. If the enemy are allowed time to bring up a large quantity of artillery the battle would end in a failure. Sir H. considered that it would be better to attack even before the preparations are quite complete than to allow the extra time to the enemy. The matter was referred to Sir D. H. who agreed with Sir Henry. Foch has therefore reluctantly given way, and the original date is to be adhered to.

Ammunition for the 18-pounders and 4.5 howitzers is practically limitless. Good for the 60-pounders and 6-inch howitzers, but only moderate for the siege guns, 8-inch and 9.2. It is to be hoped, however, there will be as much as the gun teams can conveniently handle.

June 24. The field artillery have been engaged to-day in destroying the barbed wire entanglements of the enemy's numerous defences. This is reported to have progressed favourably. The enemy's artillery did not retaliate to any extent. To-night we were to have let off 5,000 cylinders of gas, and at the same time to bombard the enemy's front line trenches very heavily. The wind, however, has entirely dropped and it is very doubtful whether it will be possible to

let off gas to-night. The wind has been just right all day. A German shell unluckily hit one cylinder, and the effects killed four and gassed 19 of our own men, so the sooner it can be handed over to the enemy the better. The enemy delivered a very violent attack on the Verdun sector, with six divisions. He got into the French front line in some places, but has been ejected again to-day. All this is good for us, as it shows that the bulk of his heavy guns are still before Verdun, and it is everything to us that they should remain there for the present.

June 25. The bombardment has been continued all day. The bulk of it, field guns and 4.5 howitzers, although the heavy siege guns have done some shooting also. I went this morning to our support trenches in the Thiepval area to see if the German wire entanglements on that sector were being cut satisfactorily. This had progressed quite well. The German artillery was extraordinarily silent, and I only saw half a dozen enemy shells, and had none near me. This afternoon our aeroplanes bombed all the German observation balloons on our front successfully, three in number, which were brought down in flames.

June 27. The bombardment has been progressing satisfactorily, and the wind has been favourable enough for us to loose the greater part of our gas, except on the 13th Corps front, which on account of the salient, requires a south wind. The result of the gas on the enemy... we have no means of knowing. The destruction of the barbed wire entanglements appears to progress satisfactorily, although in this respect the results obtained by the trench mortars have been decidedly disappointing, and it has been necessary to assist them with the field guns more than was anticipated. Several raids were carried out last night. One of these captured 15 Germans, including an officer; another three. One raid found no Germans in their section of the front line. The raids of the 8th Corps fronts did not get in, as the enemy there put up a heavy artillery barrage. Elsewhere the enemy artillery reply was very weak. The prisoners state that they had not received any rations for three days,* which shows that our night artillery barrage, which has been kept up since the bombardment commenced on 24th, has been efficient, anyhow on that sector of the front. The prisoners did not seem to have suffered from the gas; I don't think anyone except the gas people expected they would, owing to the efficiency of their masks. Anyhow the continual fear of a gas attack, and the constant wearing of gas masks in consequence, must add considerably to their discomfort, and help to lower their *morale*. Two deserters came in from Mametz, saying they were practically the last survivors of their regiment; that our artillery fire was hell, and that they came across rather than wait for certain death. Of course too much reliance cannot be placed on these statements, as men after a heavy bombardment so often imagine they are almost the last survivors, which, in reality, is not the case at all. However, this is certainly encouraging. There is at present no news of the enemy having brought reinforcements in men or guns to this area, and it is hoped that he still does not realise the magnitude of our attack.

*This may, of course, only be due to a bad quartermaster and transport officer in that particular regiment, who preferred to let his regiment go hungry rather than risk his neck by taking up rations through the artillery barrage.—R.V.S.

June 28. We have been most unlucky to-day in the weather; it poured all night and all this morning, the ground is now very heavy and slippery. But what was worse still it was so misty that the gunners could not see their targets and the result of their fire. The clouds were too low to allow of any use being made of our aeroplanes. As to-day was the last and most intensive day of our bombardment, prior to the assault to-morrow, it is a great misfortune. The French were most anxious to postpone the attack for another 48 hours; a conference was held this morning here, in which it was decided to postpone the attack and continue the bombardment for another 48 hours. We have plenty of the smaller shells for this, but there is some shortage of ammunition for the siege batteries. As the bombardment was arranged for five days, and has now to be spun out over seven days, there are difficulties. Of course it is a great handicap to the attacking infantry if the ground is very muddy and slippery, and it is necessary that there should be a heavy and intensive bombardment all day prior to the assault. With two days more bombardment it is hoped that the enemy's wire and trenches will be better destroyed, and his infantry holding the line still more tired and depressed. On the other hand the enemy has more time to bring up guns and reinforcements, and may even succeed in relieving his men in the line. I am inclined to think the decision to postpone the assault was wise.

June 29. The bombardment has continued all day, with periods of concentrated fire. The wire-cutting appears to be fairly satisfactory especially round the Fricourt salient. The weather, I am glad to say, has improved.

June 30. As I sit in this room and write these notes I can hardly believe it is the eve of the greatest battle Great Britain has ever fought—that to-morrow, within a few miles, the whole striking strength of the British Empire, and the French and Russian also, will attack the common enemy and try and force the decision for which we have waited and worked for so long—that scores of thousands of strong, healthy men will have died in the great cause between now and to-morrow night. The result, what will it be? What would we not give to know? The repeated and unsuccessful attacks of the enemy at Verdun over a period of 148 days have brought into the bounds of possibility a completely successful attack by the whole of the Allies simultaneously, for the enemy has enormously weakened his power of resistance. The French are attacking on our right with 17 divisions, which is a truly magnificent achievement for a nation which has been at death grips with the foe on another part of the front for 148 days. The 4th Army now is *334,674 strong, supported by 450 siege guns and over 1,000 field guns, and 150 aeroplanes. This Army of 23 divisions is opposed

* The figures from official records are:

Fourth Army, 1st July, 1916:

(1) 25 Divisions	11,851 Officers	301,123 Other Ranks.
Army Troops	176 „	3,524 „
Corps Troops	857 „	17,143 „
Totals	12,884 „	321,790 „

(2) Divisions actually attacking, 1st July, 1916:
6,008 Officers. 156,214 Other Ranks.

by four German divisions in the front line and one in reserve. We have now had four months of ceaseless preparation. Every Brigade has six times attacked similar trenches to those we are attacking to-morrow, which have been dug in the training areas in rear. Every officer and every man knows exactly what he has to do, and is determined to do it. For seven days our artillery have been bombarding the enemy's position. Numerous gas and smoke attacks have been launched, and when the enemy has manned his parapet he has been slated with artillery. The various plans of attack that have been decided upon by the Army Commander are to my mind first-rate. They are . . . too lengthy and intricate to enter upon in these notes, but one point that I think should be mentioned here, is that the whole attack is to be carried out on a time-table until the objectives are reached. The infantry are to occupy each position as the intense artillery fire lifts off it on to the next one. In my opinion everything depends on the infantry following upon the heels of the artillery barrage, which will go in front of them in each task. The weather appears to be favourable, which is an enormously important factor in modern battles. There are, however, two things which may defeat us; or rather, I should say, not two, but a combination of both. These are the magnificent fighting qualities of the enemy and his ever-present machine-guns. No matter how long or how heavy the bombardment it is impossible to knock out every machine-gun, or kill all the detachments. One machine-gun may hold up a whole Brigade if it is properly handled, and a quantity of machine-guns may hold up our whole attack, and slaughter us in thousands. We have reason to hope that only a small number of machine-guns will be properly handled owing to the great physical strain which the enemy have had to bear during these seven days bombardment. Deserters have told us they have been able to get no rations up for three days and very little water. Another man captured in a recent raid was staring mad; another said he was one of the last survivors of his company. It appears that the *morale* of the enemy is shaken, and that he is not in a position to fight his machine-guns to the end, but if he does, God help us. The suspense is great. The feeling is like that of a man watching his horse go down to the starting post, when he has staked his last penny and welfare of his family upon it. But in this case it is the British Empire that is the stake, and incidentally probably one's last penny as well. This time to-morrow we shall know for better or for worse. One thing I do know is that all has been done in the way of forethought and preparation that it is possible for human creatures to do, and that it is now in God's hands to do as He pleaseth. (11.35 p.m.: we attack at 7 a.m. to-morrow.)

The Battle. The weather conditions are ideal; this morning at 6 a low ground mist hung over the trenches and remained until after our infantry assault commenced, making it very difficult for the German artillery observers to see the targets. Dummy attacks with smoke clouds were very successful and drew a heavy fire from the enemy's guns off our advancing infantry elsewhere. Owing to the mist I could see very little beyond the bursting of the countless shells. The roar of our artillery was intense and the German positions were hidden

in clouds of smoke and dust. We returned to 4th Army Headquarters at 8.30. The reports are coming in fast, and so far quite satisfactory; we have taken the front system on the whole front. The 8th Corps have got their first objective. One brigade of 10th Corps has been held up, but the brigades on each side of it are pushing on, which will threaten the flanks of the enemy. The Germans in front of 15th and 13th Corps are reported to be surrendering freely. One brigade took 100 prisoners in the enemy's front system. The French 20th Corps on our right are advancing successfully in conformity with our 13th Corps. The enemy launched a counter-attack from the village of Hardecourt against the French left, but without success.

10.45 p.m. On our right we have had success and the 15th and 13th Corps have reached their objectives, and taken the villages of Montauban, Mametz, and have surrounded the village of Fricourt, where, however, the Germans have refused to surrender. The 34th Division of the 3rd Corps has reached its objective, the trench in front of the village of Contalmaison. The remainder of the 3rd Corps was at first successful, but came under very heavy machine-gun fire, and fell back. The enemy were not driven out of the village of Ovillers, and their machine-guns from there caused very heavy casualties. The 10th Corps were held up by machine-guns and could not gain their objectives; the 36th Ulster Division, however, made progress, but as the divisions on their flanks could not get on, had to fall back. The 8th Corps, the success of which had always been considered doubtful, progressed well at first, but did not clear all the enemy from the dug-outs in the lines they passed over; these appeared from their hiding-places and fired with their machine-guns in the rear of our attacking forces, causing them heavy casualties and preventing their advance. During the afternoon the enemy launched a counter-attack from the north, and drove the 8th Corps back into the trenches from which they started. The situation, in short, is that the right was successful and the left not; the 15th and 13th Corps reached their objectives without very great loss and captured a considerable number of prisoners. The French 6th Army on our right has gained its objectives everywhere. The German resistance was not very severe and the casualties not very heavy on the French side. They took 4,000 prisoners. They have still the German last main line of defence (before them) as have also the 15th and 13th British Corps. Before this can be assaulted, the guns will have to be brought up, and a thorough bombardment made. It is a strong line, consisting of a front and support line, both well wired, and provided with the usual 20-foot dug-out. The 8th and 10th Corps, who are now back in the German front line, have suffered very heavily and are now very disorganised. The Corps Commanders are depresssed, and Sir Henry has sent General Gough to re-organise and discuss what is to be done next. The village of Fricourt is surrounded on three sides, but the enemy in it will not surrender. It is hoped that the right of the 21st Division and the left of the 7th Division will get touch with one another behind it, during the night.

July 2. Second day of the Battle. It was decided this morning that the 8th and 10th Corps should not attack again until another bombardment had been

organised. It was, however, considered necessary to take La Boisselle and to secure the flank of the 34th Division, and to join up on the far side of Fricourt with the two Corps that had gained their objective. General Foch came last night to see the A.C. and I gathered that the French are to attack the next objective, which is the German last line, and that they have got up some of their guns in a position to do so.

11 p.m. Two Brigades of the 9th Division, to which the above task was allotted, have succeeded in driving the enemy out of La Boisselle and joining up with the 34th Division. The 21st and 7th Divisions have succeeded in joining up behind Fricourt, and the village was in consequence captured; 10 machine guns were taken here and 200 more prisoners, bringing the total to 4,000. The 8th and 10th Corps are to attack their objectives to-night; the attack is to be preceded by one hour's intensive bombardment. The 8th Division (3rd Corps) and the 29th Division (8th Corps) have been taken out of the battle and sent into the rest area, and their places taken by two of the divisions which were in reserve. Last night the enemy tried to retake Montauban with a brigade, but this counter-attack was successfully repulsed.

The French attack, south of the Somme, was magnificent. It was delivered at 2.30 and by 5 o'clock half of the German very strong second and last line system was in their hands. Frise was encircled and passed, the Germans holding it being completely surrounded. The Germans have now no more entrenched lines in front of the French and, so far as the French are concerned, the first phase of this great battle, that of breaking the enemy's line, is completed, and the second phase of attacking him on the flank and rolling him up will commence. If the Germans have any forces available, they will do all in their power to regain their line. They have already delivered one counter-attack which was easily repulsed.

July 3. It was decided during the night that the 8th and 10th Corps were not in a fit state to attack a position so strongly held by machine-guns, and that it would be better policy to press home our attack on the Corps fronts which had already gained their objectives, and to attack as soon as possible the main German second system. The projected attack of the 8th and 10th Corps, which I mentioned in last night's notes, was therefore abandoned. The 21st Division (15th Corps) has taken shelter in Fricourt wood, and is in touch with the Divisions on its right and left (19th and 7th). The Germans on this sector are surrendering freely, and 2,000 have been taken in the course of the day. One battalion which had been brought by train from Champagne and put straight into the battle was in our prisoners' camp intact two hours after getting out of the train, having suffered 200 casualties. The ground was quite strange to them, and on finding our men were on two sides of them they surrendered to a man. A German Colonel who had surrendered, afterwards took out his revolver and shot one of our men in cold blood. He is to be shot to-morrow.

The French have continued their successes and entered the village of Flaucourt (one mile east of the German last line of trenches and two miles from Peronne). There 30 Frenchmen made prisoner 150 Germans. I understand they

hope to use their cavalry to-morrow to secure the crossings of the Somme. The total number of prisoners is about 8,000 by the French, and 550 by the British.

July 4. We have made no further attacks to-day, but guns are being busily brought forward on to the ground already captured, preparatory to attacking the next German main line. Before their attack can be launched, however, Mametz Wood and Quadrangle Trench must be captured. These two objectives are to be attacked to-night at 12.30.

The French have again been most successful, they have pushed patrols to within a mile and a half of Peronne, also captured the villages of Belloy and Estrees. I understand General Foch's plan is to form a defensive flank on the south of his advance, and bring forward his guns to enfilade the north bank of the river, and so help our advance, and that of the French 20th Army Corps. It seems to me a pity he does not attack the German line to the south, as their flank there is already exposed, and there would appear to be a unique opportunity of rolling up some miles of the German line, using the Somme as a defensive flank during the operation. We and the 20th Corps have still some very strong trenches to capture, which by now are, no doubt, very strongly held, whereas south of the river the German defences are entirely pierced already. The Germans will no doubt make it very difficult for the French south of the Somme to cross to our side, and it is quite possible that the 20th Corps and ourselves may fail to capture the strong German line which is still before us. I hope I am wrong, but the Germans have no doubt managed to scrape up some reinforcements, and I personally anticipate great difficulty and very heavy losses ahead of us in capturing the next line, especially as I have no confidence in our artillery to knock out all the machine-guns.

July 5. Very little has been done to-day, which is, to my mind, quite fatal. And I am convinced we are not pushing home our success of the 15th and 13th Corps nearly fast enough. We ought to have attempted the capture of Mametz Wood and all the preliminary positions necessary for launching an attack on the main second line very much sooner. We are at present merely giving the enemy time to bring up guns, and by the 7th or 8th, when we are to attack the next position, we shall probably not be able to take it. I am more than ever inclined to disagree with the strategy of the higher commands, especially that of General Foch* for his continued intention of crossing the Somme, and attacking north, instead of attacking the exposed German flank to the south, where the enemy is very weak and without any defences. I am inclined to think that a success was expected north of the river more than south of it, and that plans were made accordingly. When the southern attack succeeded and the northern failed, the plans were not reversed, and by the time the northern attack has altogether failed it will be too late to exploit the success obtained south of the river in the first three days. The enemy will have had time to recover and dig himself in, and we shall have to revert to trench warfare. I disagree with making

* I have found out since that it is our higher commands who are insisting on the French assisting our hitherto rather unsuccessful operation, instead of driving home their great success. This piece of selfishness and the delay it causes will probably cause the failure of the whole operations.—R.V.S.

any further attacks on Thiepval or Ovillers, unless we are able to get them from the rear. I am convinced a frontal attack is totally useless, and only wastes the strength of the army and sacrifices an enormous amount of life. I am sure these places, which are stronger than fortresses, are defended entirely by machine-guns with the minimum of infantry.

July 6. Nothing has taken place on our front, except preparations for attacking the next position. The final preliminary objectives are to be attacked to-morrow. I am not altogether optimistic about doing so successfully, but if properly attacked we might be able to take Contalmaison, which does not appear to be very strongly fortified. The enemy counter-attacked the French 20th Corps north of Hem this afternoon; they succeeded at first, but were driven back later.

On 7th July Dick writes to his mother:

. . . As the papers are telling you we are in the midst of a dreadful battle, every inch of ground has to be fought for desperately, and the Bosches are certainly most wonderful soldiers; 200 of them still held out for 24 hours in the village of Fricourt after we had completely surrounded it. I fear we are being too slow and personally I disagree with our strategy, but I hope I am wrong. Certainly the organisation this time has been very good, and there have been no muddles. I am not altogether optimistic, I am afraid. Geoffrey Barclay's battalion has suffered very heavily, and he is at present commanding it, the colonel being killed. Poor Charlie Palk, Father Cuth's friend, commanding the 1st Hampshires, was killed the first day of the battle. The French have been wonderfully successful, largely due to their splendid artillery which is still very much better than ours. And they have suffered very much less casualties in consequence. But I think there is no doubt the Germans have made a more desperate resistance in front of us. We are hoping for more good news from Russia; our only chance of a decision is by continual and intense pressure everywhere. . . .

July 7 and 8. Two very unsatisfactory days as far as the British are concerned. We have twice taken Contalmaison and twice retreated from it, as soon as it was shelled by the enemy. This Division of the New Army, I fear, is not showing much tenacity, probably largely due to inexperienced officers. But the New Army, who have no experience of open warfare, seem to think that when they are out of a trench it is impossible to hang on to a position in the open. Until they learn to do this it is difficult to see how we expect to compete with the Bosches. I think this delay is fatal, and what is worse we are holding up and ruining the whole of the French operations, which have been most successful. Had we allowed them to push home their success south of the river Somme as they wished to do, they would almost certainly have rolled up the German line on the front of a good many miles. It seems almost incredible that jealously and selfishness should make us hold them to helping us in the difficult task ahead of us, which we are carrying out with only moderate success, and an enormous waste of precious time. Instead of making them help us, we should have helped them to drive home their success. Yesterday we attacked Trônes Wood and the French attacked Hardecourt. The French carried the village and

we failed to take the wood until they had bombarded it again for us with their guns. The French artillery in this battle has been quite magnificent, and has broken down all German resistance in front of it; in consequence their losses have been slight,* and only one-eighth of ours, although gaining far greater successes. If much more time is wasted, thus allowing the enemy to bring up a mass of artillery, I consider the operations are bound to fail.

July 10. The fighting has been very severe to-day, and has, on the whole, been successful for us. We captured Mametz Wood, and again recaptured the village of Contalmaison. The possession of both these places is necessary in order that we may be able to attack the German second line as soon as possible. The bombardment of it is to commence to-morrow and to be continued for two days. As the line is only a front and support line, and the concentration of guns on them will be enormous† it ought to go hard with the enemy. It is sure to be strongly held, as there is no other line for the enemy to go to, whereas in his front system he had a perfect labyrinth of trenches well provided with enormously deep dug-outs.

July 11. A small counter-attack on Contalmaison was repulsed without much difficulty. We have strengthened and consolidated our positions in Mametz Wood and Trônes Wood. To-day the bombardment of the second German system is being carried out, including wire cutting. The Contalmaison affair last night seems to have been very successful.

12th July, 1916.

My dearest Pam.—A line to wish you many happy returns of your birthday, which I hope may be celebrated by a great victory here. Things went well for us yesterday, and we succeeded in capturing Mametz Wood and the village of Contalmaison. I hope the Germans are getting tired. I have got a platoon of the Prussian Guard doing odd jobs here at Headquarters, which includes cleaning all the muck out of the stable yard, etc. . . . it is very satisfactory to see them at it. They certainly are very hard workers. One fellow was a waiter at the Carlton before the war and speaks English very well. He is quite a nice man and was fighting in Russia all last summer; it was most interesting talking to him. What news of Philip? I am glad he is out of this show whatever happens. . . . Fred Carden's brother, Ronald, was killed yesterday, I am sorry to say, in Mametz Wood. . . .

July 13. During the last two days the enemy have made several very determined counter-attacks, all of which failed. We have employed the last two days in bombarding the German second system, and the woods and villages in rear of it. To-morrow it is to be attacked from Contalmaison Villa to Longueval and Waterlot Farm. With this attack will open the third phase of this great battle, which, if successful, may ultimately lead to a decision. No one can over-estimate the great consequence of a successful attack to-morrow. If it succeeds the great

* The whole of the 20th French Army Corps only lost 500 men, the Corps being 35,000 strong, on the first day of the battle.—R.V.S.

†We had one gun to every six yards of trench of the sector attacked, which I believe is the most intense concentration of the war so far, and exceeds anything at Verdun, except possibly the German concentration on the Fort of Vaux just before its capture by them.—R.V.S.

German defensive system, which they have worked on for 20 months, and made as strong as it is possible for any fortifications to be, will be pierced, and they will be forced to continue the battle in the open with tired troops, very much outnumbered. The first phase of this battle consisted of the great attack on 1st July carried out with 10 divisions, the northern half of which ended in failure. The second phase began on the 3rd July and consisted of continuing the success already obtained by the 3rd, 13th and 15th Army Corps, and in capturing the woods and villages which lay between the German first and second systems, in order to be able to launch an attack on the latter. These woods and the village of Contalmaison were most stubbornly defended by the enemy and changed hands repeatedly. This second phase of the fighting was carried out by comparatively small forces only and, as I have said, was merely the intermediate stage between the two great battles or rather phases of the same battle. These operations were brought to a successful conclusion on the 10th and the guns were brought forward and the artillery preparation on the second line commenced on the 11th and has continued since then.

The attack to-morrow would be a certain success if it were not for the enormous number of machine-guns the enemy have, and the magnificent fighting qualities of the men who work them. They fight to the last even when surrounded, and it is quite impossible for our artillery, however great the quantity of ammunition expended, to destroy more than a proportion of them. Those that are left always inflict terrible casualties on us.

Guns used and ammunition expended in bombardment preliminary to the attack delivered at dawn on 14th July, 1916:

No. of Guns.	Type of Guns.	Number of Shells used.
522	18-pounder field guns	294,258
132	4.5 field howitzers	74,054
88	60-pounder heavy guns	27,442
80	6-inch howitzers	43,144
36	8-inch siege howitzers	11,018
36	9.2-inch siege howitzers	6,222
7	12-inch howitzers	1,281
2	15-inch howitzers	132
12	6-inch guns	1,274
1	9.2-inch gun	69
1	12-inch gun	30
24	220 mm. French howitzers	9,600
36	75 mm. French field guns	15,000
24	120 mm. French field guns	8,300
1,001	guns which fired - - -	491,824 shells

Guns per yard of front attacked were one gun to every six yards, and one heavy gun to every 19 yards.

July 14. Third Phase of the great Battle. To-day has been more successful than we had dared to hope. The intensive bombardment preceding the assault appears to have been very good, and the infantry, who had advanced in the darkness to within 200 yards of the enemy lines, rushed them without any difficulty except in one small piece which was captured later. Lewis guns had been pushed forward to within 80 yards of the German trenches and these swept the enemy parapets until the infantry came up level with them. It speaks well for the accuracy of the field artillery that this should have been possible. After capturing the double line of trenches, the villages of Bazentin le Petit, Bazentin le Grand, and Longueval, were taken in quick succession, and with the capture of these and Bazentin Wood, all the objectives were reached, and immediately consolidated to resist the enemy's counter-attack. But with the exception of a feeble effort with small forces, no counter-attack was delivered, and this afternoon the Army Commander ordered High Wood to be attacked and consolidated as well.* Forty officers, including two Regimental Commanders (corresponding to our Brigadier-Generals) and over 1,400 prisoners were captured. One of the regiments of the 3rd Guards Division was annihilated and its Colonel captured. The German shell fire was not very severe, and decreased during the day, indicating that they have hurriedly moved their guns further to their rear. To sum up the day's operations: the great German lines on the Western front have been pierced, a thing which everyone had come to think impossible, and no one more than the Germans.† It is true the gap is at present only 6,000 yards wide, but with the troops here it is quite possible we may be able quickly to increase it, and it may be the beginning of a great decisive battle in the open, in which numbers will be heavily on the side of the Allies. It must also be remembered that the next phase of the great French attack will take place in the next few days, on the already discomfited Bosch army.

July 15. The operations to-day, after the great success of yesterday, have been distinctly disappointing. We attacked Pozières, and gained the greater part of the village, but retired from it on account of the German shell fire. I think more experienced troops would have remained in possession of the village; the enemy have certainly managed to hold villages which have been subjected to far worse bombardments from us. A fresh attack was ordered by the G.O.C. 3rd Corps at 4 p.m. after half an hour's intensive bombardment from 100 of our heavy guns; the German machine-gunners were, however, able to repulse this attack. There appear to be two reasons for this: (1) the trench on the edge of the village was not properly bombarded; our contact aeroplane reported that he saw Germans running into the village after our bombardment lifted, in time to use their machine-guns against our attack; (2) the infantry did not go in

*This wood was entered, but the enemy managed to gain possession of it again. I am convinced from what has occurred since, that a mistake was made in not pushing a fresh brigade, following up the first attack, to get possession of this most important point in the morning. The few hours delay was partly caused by the the hope of being able to use the cavalry in getting them up there; it meant everything to the enemy.

†The front pierced was only 4,000 yards in extent, which seems too small to allow of development unless the enemy are unable to bring up reinforcements quickly.—R.V.S.

quick enough after the guns lifted, and thus gave the Germans time to come out of their dug-outs and use their machine-guns. The enemy counter-attacked High Wood, and succeeded in recapturing part of it from us, and by so doing forced our patrols, which had been pushed forward to the outskirts of Martinpuich, to fall back on account of enfilade fire from enemy machine-guns in High Wood. The South African Brigade succeeded in driving the enemy out of Delville Wood, and repulsing a counter-attack this afternoon, delivered from the direction of Flers. This is satisfactory and is the only real gain of the day. We had hoped to have taken and held Pozières, and, with luck, Martinpuich as well. But one cannot expect continual success when fighting soldiers of the quality the Germans have shown themselves to be.

July 16. No further attacks have been delivered to-day, and the time has been spent in consolidating and reorganising for the next big assault, which is to be made in conjunction with the French. The Germans, with their usual military skill, have succeeded in regaining the whole of High Wood. They have also managed to get a couple of machine-guns into the orchard north of Longueval, which is very tiresome, and if not dealt with at once will cause a great deal of trouble. The weather is cloudy, a great nuisance to us, as we have really got command of the air at present, and it is, or would be, a very great asset if we were able to make full use of it.

July 17. The enemy during the night has succeeded in digging a trench from High Wood to their machine-gun post in the orchard, a fine bit of work on their part, and most annoying to us. On the other hand we have managed to work up the double line of trenches from Bazentin le Petit Wood, to the outskirts of Pozières*; this is a valuable gain and makes a successful attack on Pozières much more likely. Pozières will have to be captured and the Germans in High Wood and Longueval orchard cleared out before the next large attack can be undertaken. The weather remains very cloudy, which is most tiresome as it prevents our artillery from bombarding the next objectives. . . . For these aerial observation is required, which at the present moment we cannot get. It is probable we shall have to postpone the next attack, which is most trying, as it allows the enemy time to dig trenches and bring up more guns.

11 p.m. Sir Henry arranged with General Foch this afternoon that the main attack should be postponed to the 20th, in the hope of getting some aerial observations to-morrow or the next day. I am quite sure this was wise. Pozières, however, is to be bombarded all night, and attacked at dawn from two sides. Its capture will help matters for the next general attack. The delay is more than annoying, for the Bosches dig more in one night than we do in a week, and every day they get will add enormously to the strength of their positions. The difficulty of getting ammunition to our great number of guns over a mass of mud is serious; waggons and lorries get stuck and block others. A great deal

*For this guns were taken up to Sabot Copse and Fleriton Copse, and were able to enfilade the whole of this trench with great effect: when the trench was taken only two survivors of a whole German battalion were found, and the two trenches were so packed with corpses that our men could hardly pass down them.—R.V.S.

of ammunition will have to be got to the guns somehow for the bombardment of the next objectives. Lorries cannot get along the roads, which are nothing but mud tracks; even the waggons stick up to their axles. The motor ambulances cannot get forward to pick up the wounded, who are suffering terribly. The roads on the ground we have captured have been destroyed by our own shell fire. The engineers are making desperate efforts to get a light railway through to feed the guns and relieve the congestion on the roads.

July 18. The weather to-day remains very cloudy, and the night was very wet, which has not improved matters for us. We cannot use our aeroplanes and are therefore in the dark as to the enemy's movements, and are unable to carry on the bombardment of the next objectives.

10.30 p.m. The Germans delivered a strong counter-attack at 4 o'clock on Delville Wood and Longueval Village. They bombarded these places very heavily, and I feel convinced our troops had not dug themselves in very well. The enemy succeeded in retaking half the wood and the north-east corner of the village. It is difficult to estimate what forces he employed, but probably two brigades. It is of the highest importance to regain the lost portion of the village to-night, before he has had time to instal his machine-guns. As long as the villages of Cuincy and Guillemont remain untaken, the situation in Delville Wood is most unpleasant, as it forms a nasty salient, and no one is quicker to realise a weakness and take advantage of it than the Bosch.

¶Dick wrote on the same day to his mother:

. . . I don't know how much news one is allowed to send through the post; as nearly half the total number of letters are censored I won't give him the trouble of scratching out again. Our official communiqués are really very full and truthful and the Bosches have been lying badly. Both sides always lie about their failures or ignore them. For instance only half our attack on 1st July was successful. We had a very successful day indeed on 14th July in piercing the main German second system, which is the last really strong line he has got. We had hoped to have been able to increase our success more, but the Germans put up such great resistance in the woods and houses beyond, it was necessary to halt and reorganise. The weather is terribly against us as we really have got command of the air, and cannot use it. The clouds are so low it is impossible to use the aeroplanes, and several have been lost through having to fly so low. The roads, too, have got into an awful state with the rain and the enormous amount of heavy traffic on them. It makes it so hard to get up the heavy ammunition and to get away the wounded. Philip is a long way off, and is most unlikely to be in this show at all, I hope. . . .

July 19. We succeeded last night in retaking the southern half of Delville Wood, and part of the village. The situation there is still unpleasant, as the German artillery fire is very severe. It has been decided to attack High Wood early to-morrow morning, partly in the hope of taking some of the pressure off Delville Wood, and partly to help our subsequent general attack. Personally I am not in favour of this operation, as I think even if we succeed in taking High

Wood the enemy will be able to concentrate such a heavy artillery fire on it from both flanks that we shall be unable to hold it, and lose many lives in evacuating it. It should, to my mind, be attacked only just before the next general attack is launched as, even if we take it to-morrow, the holding of it for two days will be very expensive. Besides this the troops are tired, and have been fighting a great deal, in consequence will not attack with great spirit. The French are pushing forward all preparations for a big general attack, and the bombardment of the objectives is proceeding.

July 20. We succeeded in capturing High Wood, but, as I expected, the enemy was able to concentrate such a murderous fire on it, that we have had to evacuate the northern end, which is the only part of it of vital value, as it is the top of the ridge, and commands the observation. We suffered over 1,000 casualties with no result. We succeeded in retaking the lower half of Delville Wood once more. If the Higher Commanders would discuss the problems of minor strategy with the Brigadiers and Battalion Commanders who know the ground and have taken part in the actual fighting, I am sure unnecessary mistakes would be avoided, and a great deal more success would be achieved. It has been proved in this war that a small isolated operation seldom succeeds, as the enemy can concentrate all his guns against it and swamp it. This has been the case at High Wood, and also in a *very* unsuccessful operation undertaken to-day by the 1st Army, in which we had some 5,000 casualties and are now back in our old trenches.

The French attacked to-day on both sides of the Somme. North of the river they gained their objectives. South of the river they were not altogether successful, but made an advance on a front of 11 kilometres, to a depth varying from 600 to 1,000 yards. They took nearly 3,000 prisoners and only suffered about 6,000 casualties, so evidently did not push forward their attack where they were met with much resistance. The Germans must have suffered considerably more, so the operations, although a greater advance had been expected, cannot be considered a failure. They are bombarding again preparatory to another general attack.

July 21. To-day has been devoted by us to ranging our guns on to the new German switch line, and in preparing the distributions of the infantry for the attack on the switch line. The weather has been good, and the aerial observation therefore satisfactory.

July 23. The attack on the switch line, which was delivered last night, failed, also the attack on Guillemont. The failure was due, not to the strength of the line, or bad preparation on the part of the artillery, but the enemy had pushed forward many machine-guns into the standing corn and shell holes in front of their line, which made it impossible for our troops to advance. They had made a strong point filled with machine-guns near High Wood; these enfiladed our troops advancing from Bazentin Wood, and made it impossible to continue the attack. The attack on Guillemont failed for very much the same reason—machine-guns hidden in the standing corn. We shall have to push out strong patrols to deal with these nuisances before another general attack can be under-

taken. It is probable also that we shall be obliged to sap up closer to the switch trench before attacking it. It is ground of such importance that the enemy will make every effort to prevent our getting hold of it. The 1st Anzac Corps has managed to get part of Pozières and there is every reason to expect they will take the whole village. This would place the Germans in the switch line between Pozières and High Wood in an unpleasant position. The Germans show no signs of making a counter-attack on any large scale, and are employing their men to strengthen the new line of trenches they have dug, as far as we can make out. The A.C. told me he expected a big German attack would have been delivered to-day as the enemy has had time to organise one on a large scale, and it would upset our arrangements for future operations if they could retake Longueval.

¶ To his mother Dick's comments on the situation, written on the same day, betray a little of the inevitable depression of the moment:

. . . Here the battle drags on, progress much slower than we should like, but I suppose as fast as one can expect. The Bosches seem to fight as well out of their trenches as they do in them, and their machine-guns, hidden in woods and standing corn, are very deadly, especially as our gunners can't see where they are. The decision of the battle has still to come. The Russians seem to do as they like with the Austrians, but they are not so successful with the Bosch. Philip is somewhere back in the Boulogne-St. Omer area,* and is not likely to come to these parts, I am glad to say. The enemy have got a great many men and guns here now, but as we are masters of the air, their guns can't do us so much harm as they might. . . . I suppose our Ruthie will soon be home, which will cheer you both up; I had a letter from her the other day, but have not had time to answer it. We have not been very successful to-day, but we must hope for the best to-morrow. The enemy have taken back part of Delville Wood, and we failed to get Guillemont. . . .

July 24. The Australians have made further progress in Pozières, and captured two battalion commanders. The situation in Delville Wood remains unsatisfactory: the enemy have possession of the greater part of it. The enemy have been shelling a good deal all day, especially at Longueval.

10 p.m. The artillery fire has become very intense and the enemy are reported to be attacking on the front High Wood—Longueval. At 6 p.m. our aeroplanes reported that the Germans were very thick in their trenches east of Delville Wood; 200 guns were therefore turned on them at once, and considerable execution was no doubt done, but not sufficient, it appears, to prevent them from launching an attack.

July 25. The attack on Longueval was effectually stopped by our guns before any progress could be made. An attack, however, was delivered from High Wood, which was repulsed by the 19th Division. It does not appear to have been pushed home by the enemy with any great dash.

* Philip was actually at Hazebrouck!

July 27. After an intense bombardment from 368 guns we again attacked Delville Wood and captured it, taking 165 prisoners, practically all that was left of the Branderburg Grenadier Regiment. . . . We also, after some very hard fighting, took the northern part of Longueval which we had lost. The enemy counter-attacked this afternoon, but failed to retake anything, and must have suffered considerably. . . . The regiments defending Delville Wood were the Branderburgers, and of the three battalions in the wood very few appear to have escaped.

July 29. The last two days have been fine and very favourable to our artillery. The bombardment of the next objective, Guillemont village and the main German second system south of Waterlot Farm, has proceeded satisfactorily, and several enemy batteries have been knocked out. Guillemont is to be attacked to-morrow in conjunction with an attack by the French on our right on Maurepas and the trenches on each side of it. If the infantry really follow up the barrage of their own artillery closely, there is no reason it should not succeed; on the other hand, if there is the slightest hesitation or delay, failure is certain, as the Germans are ready, waiting and expecting an attack, and if they are allowed time to man their machine-guns after our artillery lifts, and before our infantry are upon them, we shall fail.

July 30. The attack on Guillemont was not very successful. Our men penetrated the village as far as the church, after which the situation became obscure;* over 200 of our men appear to have surrendered there; the cause is difficult to see, but it is known that the enemy had strong forces defending this sector, amounting to a division. The French on our right did not succeed in getting possession of Maurepas, but gained Hem Wood and some ground. The Germans made several counter-attacks, more especially against the French, but only met with partial success. The 3rd and 15th Corps managed to capture some strong points, but they were quite small; on the whole we have had an unsuccessful day, which does not coincide with the headliness of that detestable paper, *The Daily Mail*. We have had about 3,000 casualties. For what? We have very good news from Russia, which is cheering. The enemy have got such a large concentration of men and guns here now, and have dug new lines of trenches so quickly, that personally I consider we are not likely to be able to make much further advance. I don't know what the C.-in-C.'s views are, but it seems to me we are very much in the same position as the Germans found themselves at the end of the first month's fighting at Verdun. If we stop, all our gains and all our sacrifices are more or less wasted; if we go on, we are only throwing away life without very much chance of achieving any substantial result. As the Germans had at Verdun so have we had here, *just enough* success to justify continuing the attack; whether it is right to do so or not is a matter of opinion. The most important reason for continuing is to keep the German army here, and not to give the enemy the chance to help the hard-pressed Austrians. It is part of the great strategic plan to destroy Austria and Turkey as far as possible this year, so

*It seems probable from what I hear that our men ran out of ammunition. Casualties, 1st to 31st July in 4th Army: Officers 5,095, other ranks 120,438—Total 125,533.—R.V.S.

that if the Germans fight on they will be isolated, and more surrounded by enemies than they are already. As for the Western front I have always been of the opinion that the war would end more or less on these present lines, and I see no reason to alter my opinion, in fact the present battle has convinced me of it more than ever. These lines can only be attacked and taken successively and after very great bombardment. Before the attacks have succeeded in piercing the last line, the defenders, with the splendid railway and road facilities which exist, have plenty of time to concentrate from other parts of the line enough guns and troops to make further progress very difficult for the attackers and as each line has been captured at great cost in lives and shells, another has been constructed by the enemy's reserves.

¶Dick writes of the situation to his mother, on 2nd August, much to the same effect as in his Diary, adding:

. . . Really this war is beyond anything and is enough to make everyone go mad. The utter endlessness of it is so depressing, but I believe we shall soon get many satisfactory alterations in the Eastern theatre of the war. . . . We have had glorious weather at last, and I have been bathing every day in the small lake which is quite close to the house. I get rather homesick in this exile; I don't suppose there is any chance of getting home on leave till the end of September or October. Lyons may get a month's leave as his time has expired; he says he would like to go in time to help with the harvest, but I doubt if he will be able to. . . .

August 5. Last night the Reserve Army (Australian Division) succeeded in gaining the high ground north-east of Pozières. This is the ridgeway, and is of very great importance, both as it threatens Thiepval and also gives observation over the enemy's switch line, and in the direction of Bapaume. The enemy counter-attacked there twice during the night, but were unsuccessful, losing 300 prisoners. There have been no other operations of any importance during the last five days.

August 8. We have once more made an attack on Guillemont, at dawn this morning, which has failed. Our inability to take this village is most annoying. The French will not continue their attack on Maurepas until we have, as they fear their left flank remaining in the air. Personally I think, and have always thought, that these isolated attacks are a great mistake, merely allowing the enemy to concentrate enough guns to defeat them, whereas if a larger operation were undertaken, the artillery fire of the enemy would be much less concentrated, and so much less effective. We know that Guillemont is well provided with deep dug-outs, and our heavy bombardment did not therefore break down the enemy's power of resistance. One battalion entered the village, but lost touch with its supports, and about 350 appeared to have surrendered to the enemy. The New Army are most gallant in the attack, but when they have got to a place, the want of experienced officers and N.C.O.'s is terribly felt. Had these men stuck it out in Guillemont until it was dark and help could have been got to them, they would have been a great thorn in the side of the enemy, and

would, no doubt, have killed a great many Germans, especially if they had used their rifles, a weapon which now appears to be merely carried and very little used. It is small parties of Germans who hang on to a place after they are surrounded, and use their machine-guns up to the end, that do more to inflict casualties upon us and upset our plans than anything else, and it seems a great pity our troops cannot do the same under similar circumstances. The reason can be explained in one word, "discipline." The Germans are all disciplined and our men are not, and cannot be during this campaign.

August 10. The King visited the Fourth Army to-day accompanied by the Prince of Wales. The Army Commander took him up to see the original German front line. He seemed to take great interest in everything. He lunched here, at Querrieu, and afterwards distributed decorations to Generals Fayolle and Balfourrier, and the commanders of the French batteries which have been working with the British Army. General Fayolle, commanding the 6th French Army, and General Balfourrier, commanding the 20th Corps, each got the G.C.M.G., with which they were very much pleased. General Congreve, commanding our 13th Corps, was taken very ill to-day, and it is feared he may die. General Cavan has been transferred to the 13th Corps from 15th as it is of vital importance to take Guillemont. It is to be attacked again as soon as possible.

¶A letter to his mother bears the same date:

. . . I was very interested in your account of Hindenburg. He must be an old devil, but I should think he is about the best General this war has produced on either side. I expect he will come down like a ton of bricks on Brusiloff's right flank before very long. At least that is what is expected here. The Germans have taken away quite a number of troops, in spite of our offensive here. . . . Philip is right at the other end of the British front from here, so I never have a chance of seeing him. I have written to Harry Mylius and asked him if he and Victor* would care to go to Benham for a visit; I am so sorry for him not having a home. It would be nice for Victor to go fishing and boating on the lake. . . . We are most awfully bothered by flies here, there are countless thousands; it is horrible to see them on one's food, knowing their habits. Most of the crops are cut now, and so one can ride about anywhere, which makes a great difference, it was such a nuisance having to keep more or less to the roads. I am afraid there is no chance of any leave for ages. I would like to have come in Ruthie's holidays. . . . We had a small success this evening, and took about 200 Bosches, and part of that vile village, Guillemont, which has given us so much trouble. . . .

August 12. At 5.30 to-day the French delivered a very successful attack on the German line from Maurepas to the Somme. The whole of this line was taken and the greater part of the village of Maurepas, and about 1,000 prisoners. The artillery preparation and the barrage preceding the attack seem to have been excellent, and the casualties of the French comparatively light. Lloyd George came to dinner; he made himself very agreeable. He seemed to think

*The Mylius family were neighbours on the Lake of Como.

Sir H. Rawlinson introduces his Aide-de-Camp to H.M. King George.
Imperial War Museum Photograph. Crown Copyright.

the war would continue for another two years and we should then gain a complete victory, and that all other conditions of peace would be impossible. I quite disagree that we shall dictate terms to the Germans if it lasts five years more. Our troops have very little discipline, and we have no officers or N.C.O.'s, and it is quite impossible to make them even in two years. As it is, as soon as an officer begins to have any experience he is killed, and in consequence, the standard of the troops remains the same. The Germans, on the contrary, have trained their whole nation of 68 millions in time of peace. The French will be too much exhausted to give us much help in the offensive next year, and the German lines will be even stronger, and with more machine-guns, even if they have not as many men.

¶To H.D.A.:

13th August, 1916.

. . . Thank you very much for your letters. I quite agree, life during this war is vile, and you must get very tired of manual labour to the extent you have to do it now. The exile here is dreadful, and although there is a certain amount of interest, continually seeing sordid misery and people suffering is really dreadful. . . . How I wish we were all going off to Varenna as we were to have done the year war broke out. . . . It is indeed sad about Geoffrey. He got through this battle all right, being one of the few left in his battalion. His Colonel had been killed and he was in command when it was taken out from here on account of its losses and sent north to a quieter part of the line, so it was great odds against his being hit. I don't know how he was killed, but I suppose it must have been an unlucky shell. He is indeed a sad loss, as there aren't many such real good fellows as him. You really ought to insist on Mother going away for a bit: it would do you both good to get a change. . . . My new flat in South Audley Street will soon be ready, so you will be able to go there this autumn. It would make a change to go to London for three weeks, and there would be room for mother, and Kitty Cat-Face* too. However nice one's home is, it is good for everyone to get a change sometimes, and it is all the nicer to get back. I am afraid there is no hope of seeing the end of the war this year. . . . Is Harry Mylius still with you, I wonder? He has a sad, lonely life I am afraid. This battle goes on, it bursts up and dies down in turn; we are certainly having the best of it, but the Bosch is a long way from demoralisation and defeat at present, I am afraid. . . .

August 18. To-day we have once more commenced the attack on Guillemont. This time it was to be carried out in two stages; one to-day and one to-morrow, or later, as convenient. The objectives were gained, except on one small sector, and over 300 prisoners were taken. Our lines, in consequence of this, are now right up to Guillemont and round it on the north. Our front line is also pushed to within attacking distance of Guinchy. Although these are useful gains, I do not consider they were worth the price we paid (there were over 5,000 casualties) unless we are able to derive considerable further successes as a

*Dick's nursery nickname for Lady Sutton's maid.

result. I am convinced from what I heard that the losses of the enemy did not exceed 2,000. The 2nd Corps made a very successful attack on some trenches south of Thiepval, capturing 500 prisoners and only having 300 casualties themselves. They appear to have advanced very close to their own barrage, which inflicted a few casualties on them, but they caught all the enemy in their dug-outs, having had no time to bring out their machine-guns.

"Me brother-in-law's in munitions,
Drawin' four quid a week at the game,
'E's bought a pianner and lives on the fat,
Sleeps in a bed wi' clean sheets and all that,
While I get a bob for a night and a day
Waist deep in mud, having hell for my pay,
Yet somehow I'm glad as I came."

(This verse is noted by Dick in the margin opposite the above account of taking of trenches near Thiepval).

August 20. We made another unsuccessful attack on Guillemont, with not very large forces. Our inability to take this village is really pitiable, and shows how very much we are inferior to the French as accomplished and trained soldiers. . . . Our artillery is . . . inferior to theirs in every way as, I think, are our methods and local tactics. Personally I do not believe in these isolated attacks; we should advance on the whole of the 4th Army front or not at all. The village of Guillemont has been entirely destroyed by our heavy guns, but the shooting of the heavy howitzers on the strong points held by the enemy has been far from satisfactory, and in many cases they have shelled our own trenches and caused many casualties to our own infantry; a bombing party of some 15 men of the 3rd Rifle Brigade was wiped out by one of our own 9.2 shells. This is caused by the inefficiency of the heavy artillery observers and is deplorable and intolerable. This village is no stronger than any other village between here and Berlin, and yet, with very large forces of men and guns at our disposal, and unlimited ammunition, we have been trying to take it without success since 29th July. (And yet the higher Commanders and Ll.G. still triumphantly assert that we are going to invade Germany and dictate terms.) We are to continue the attack on the 24th in conjunction with a French attack from Maurepas to the Somme. I am sorry to say that even in this attack we only propose to advance our line slightly north and south of Guillemont and so partially surround it. The 2nd Corps and the Australians are making slow but sure progress towards Thiepval.

August 24. The enemy made a small counter-attack on us at Guillemont station and succeeded in entering our positions in two or three places, but was quickly driven out. However, this disorganised us for the attack we were to have delivered to-day. . . . Sir Henry, quite rightly I think, decided to postpone it, as to continue the programme would only mean more loss of life with slight chance of success. This, however, annoyed the French, who intended to continue their attack. They were luckily successful in taking their objectives on our right.

It has now been decided to undertake a larger joint operation on the 30th, which I am sure is sound, and to employ the intervening time in preparation. If it is successful large operations will be undertaken next month.

August 25. The Commander-in-Chief came here this morning. The French appear to be very much annoyed at our not having been able to get on faster, and that we did not attack in conjunction with them yesterday as arranged. Nine divisions have been transferred from the Western front to Russia, which has greatly annoyed the Russians, and considerably held up their progress. They blame the French and British for not having been able to keep all the German forces fully engaged on the Western front. But I venture to think that if they had been fighting Germans instead of Austrians, they would have had defeat instead of success, as on every other occasion when they have crossed swords with the Bosch undiluted. The Russian General Staff expects Hindenburg to deliver a strong counter-attack from the direction of Korel; should this occur and meet with any success it is feared that Rumania, who is about to join the Entente, may draw back, and the whole Balkan situation, which is fast becoming favourable to us, would be altered. Anyhow things here are fairly humming to-day, and the French are very excited. Joffre has visited Foch and expressed his annoyance, and Foch has passed it on to Fayolle, who in turn blames us. The C.-in-C. is going on to visit Foch and hopes to be able to put matters straight. I fully realise that our continuous failure to take Guillemont must be exceedingly annoying to Fayolle, and hamper his operations.

Aug. 26. The Tanks. We went to St. Riquier to see the first exhibition of the long-expected Tanks. They are land cruisers, which move on the principle of the caterpillar. They are armed with four machine-guns and two 6-pounders. Their armour is ¼-inch steel, and therefore proof against rifle and machine-gun fire. They can move at four miles an hour, over any ground, across trenches without the slightest difficulty, and even knock down small trees. Their weight is 30 tons, and, of course, barbed wire entanglements are crumpled beneath them like brown paper. If properly used they have enormous possibilities, especially the first time they appear; of course, eventually, when the Germans realise what they are, they will be able to put small high velocity guns in their front trenches, and knock them out with high explosive shells fired over the sights. But the first time they are in use, presumably the enemy will have none of these, and will have to depend on his artillery getting a direct hit on each, which will be by no means an easy job. Above all the crews *must* be properly trained and contain men and machine-gunners who have fought in the infantry, and know the conditions of 1916 battles. It is to my mind a mistake to use them first on the Somme front, where the enemy have far more guns than on any other part of the line, and are expecting to be attacked. If they were used suddenly on a quiet part of the front, without any preparatory bombardment, and were followed by strong infantry forces, it is more than probable the whole German system might be pierced. Any troops seeing these machines for the first time would, I am sure, be very likely to run away, in fact, unless they did so, and unless the artillery were lucky enough to obtain direct hits, they would probably perish by machine-

gun fire. Each successive line could thus be captured on the same day, until the entire defensive system was penetrated. The tanks could turn down a trench to right and left and deal with any strong point which was causing trouble. If, however, these machines are used without sufficient practice and manned by unreliable crews, a most valuable weapon may be entirely wasted.

August 28. Rumania. True to her agreement Rumania declared war on Austria to-day. Her intervention will be a great assistance. Morally it is a great and depressing blow for Germany, which one can best judge by thinking what our feeling would have been, had we heard that she had declared for the enemy. Even if the Rumanian Army does not prove itself of great military value, the fact of being able to add 400 miles to the German-Austrian front, is very valuable, as the Russian numbers will make themselves more felt, and it will be very difficult to defend so long a line. The intervention of Rumania has placed Bulgaria in the most awkward position. The whole of her army is facing the very formidable force of 400,000 Allies in the south, and now her northern frontier is laid open to a Russian attack down the coast through Rumania. It may reasonably be hoped that she will be induced to make a separate peace, as it will be almost impossible for the hard-pressed Central Empires to send her the amount of help she needs. How much Turkey will be persuaded to do remains to be seen. It is, I am sure, of the greatest importance that we should continue and increase the pressure on this front, and I am glad the higher command intend to undertake operations next month of great magnitude. The preliminary attacks will take place shortly, and the necessary digging is being carried out as fast as possible, for taking the places necessary as a jumping-off ground for the great offensive.

(Note.—Casualties 4th Army, August: Officers 1,386; other ranks, 32,770; total, 34,156.)

September 2. We are to attack Guinchy, Guillemont, Falfemont Farm, and the strong points north of High Wood to-morrow. The French are to attack from Maurepas to the Somme with two Army Corps. On the success of these attacks will depend the possibility of carrying out the big scheme. I think the French will probably succeed, but I am not altogether optimistic about our own success. Our troops are rather tired, and the repeated failures have made Guillemont rather a bogey. However, the German troops are probably more tired and we must hope for the best. A brigade of the 16th Irish Division is to replace a brigade of the 20th Division for to-morrow's attack; the latter being rather tired, it is considered too risky to attack with it as the C.-in-C. has said Guillemont is to be taken at all costs this time.

September 3. The Attack. 12 noon. The operations have so far been more successful than I expected, Guinchy and Guillemont have both been captured, but Falfemont farm, and the piece of line on each side of it, have yet not been taken; this is annoying as it is where we join the French. The latter have got on very well, taking the village of Cléry-sur-Somme, and advanced all along their line, even having pushed troops on to the high ground south of Combles.

6 p.m. A German counter-attack from north-east has succeeded in retaking Guinchy, and driving the 20th Brigade out of it; the details of this are not yet to hand. This left the left flank of the Brigade in Guillemont in the air, and the A.C. has ordered up a fresh battalion to protect it; I trust we shall not lose Guillemont too. We have about 650 prisoners. The French have taken Le Forêt, where they got 12 guns; they have taken about 2,000 prisoners. General Fayolle intends to attack the next German line to-morrow morning with a fresh division. I am sure this policy is right, if the organisation is good enough to allow it. The next line of trenches will be easier to take to-morrow than the day after. The enemy are bound to be very much disorganised by to-day's attack and every use should be made of this. I hope the big French attacks south of the river will come as a surprise to him. He has been bringing troops from the south of the river to the north.

11 p.m. We are still in possession of Guillemont, and our total prisoners are now over 1,000, the French 2,500. It is raining very hard, which is most annoying. As far as we are concerned the operations have been a little disappointing, especially being turned out of Guinchy, but the French have done admirably.

September 4. We have again tried to take Falfemont Farm, but have failed. This is more than annoying as until we get it the French cannot move forward their guns to attack the next line, which they had intended to do to-day. Falfemont Farm is on a hill, and from there the enemy can see the ground in rear of the present French position. It will, of course, be attacked again as soon as possible. Owing to this, the French have not made another general attack, but have pushed forward patrols. The big French attack south of the Somme has succeeded all along the lines of 16 kilometres in taking its first objectives, and a large number of prisoners, 4,000 men. I wish we could do as well as they do, but they are so much better gunners.

September 5. An attack on Falfemont Farm was successful, and our men (5th Division) pushed forward and occupied the trenches in Leuze Wood. The French have now been able to move forward their guns, and have pushed on to within 300 yards of the Bosch last line, with very little resistance from the enemy. 31 German guns were found on the captured ground, some of which were heavies. It has been on the whole a very successful day; the enemy's resistance has been slight and the advance considerable.

September 6. The difficulty of getting ammunition to their guns over ground where all the roads have been destroyed is so great that the French find they cannot attack the next German line for several days. It is necessary to make new roads up to the guns in their new position. The German line is a strong one and an attack on it is not considered advisable without a very thorough artillery preparation, which will be carried out as soon as the necessary amount of ammunition can be got forward.

September 9. Aided by the support of the French artillery we attacked and took Guinchy at 5 o'clock this afternoon, and also advanced our line into Bouleaux Wood. The attack was carried out by the 16th (South Irish) Division. The 1st Guards Brigade will relieve them to-night, and we may have every

hope of holding it. The 15th Corps also captured their objective, a trench between High Wood and Delville Wood. The number of prisoners is at present not known. The French did not attack to-day, which was as well for us, as the 1st French Corps lent us the fire of their artillery for ours.

September 12. The French attacked the German line in front of them from Combles to the Somme, and not only succeeded in taking it all along but took the village of Boucharesnes. The total number of prisoners is about 2,300 and 12 guns are also reported. We continue to prepare for our next general attack on 15th; the enemy are likewise preparing, I am sorry to say, by digging and wiring yet another line behind. The terrible fact is he can dig lines faster than we can take them, so after every attack one is in the same position as the one before, except that each time we attack we lose far more heavily than he does.

September 14. We attack to-morrow along our whole line at 6.30. Seven Infantry Divisions are to be employed, supported by all the Cavalry (five Divisions) should the line be broken. Fifty Tanks are preceding the infantry attack. Judging by the difficulties we have hitherto had in taking anything during this battle, I do not consider our chances of taking our final objectives and using our cavalry are very great unless the Tanks are a fearful moral blow to the enemy and work well. The C.-in-C. is determined to do everything to force a decision of this great battle. We have very few fresh divisions to put into it, and the enemy are in the same position or more so; the C.-in-C. thinks that a determined and general attack may prove decisive, personally I don't think so; I am very doubtful if the Tanks will get along satisfactorily on the ground which is so broken up by shell-holes but I hope some, anyhow, will do so.

September 15. The attack commenced at 6.30 this morning, and met with varying degrees of success. More than one-third of the Tanks broke down at once and never crossed the enemy's lines; those, however, which went did exceedingly well, caused a great moral effect on the enemy, and were quite invaluable to the infantry. The first objectives were reached throughout with the exception of the 6th Division; the Tanks allotted to this Division unluckily broke down except one, which was not sufficient to break the enemy's resistance. The attack on the north of High Wood was also held up; two Tanks were ordered to charge the wood, and stuck in the attempt. I think it was a mistake to ask this of them. On the left the 3rd Corps captured Martinpuich, and after considerable fighting, the whole of High Wood was captured. The Guards reached their first and second objectives and dug themselves in front of Lesboeufs, which was not assaulted. A Tank reached Flers village, and went down the main road followed by our assaulting infantry, who secured the village. Some of the Guards Division appear to have become diverted from their objectives, and joined in this attack. Meanwhile the attack of the 6th Division on the right did not progress. The day's fighting on the whole has been a partial success. The final objectives were not reached, and the right Division did not progress. These two failures, I think, are due to so many of the Tanks not getting started, and the inaccuracy of our heavy artillery during the bombardment of this bit of trench, which is most clearly shown in the air photos. I do not think we shall get a

decision in this battle now, although the attack has been ordered to continue at 9.35 to-morrow. I do not consider that this order is wise or possible to execute. The disorganisation in the front must be fearful, and it cannot be possible to get a fresh attack organised by then, no matter how good the staffs may be, but the C.-in-C., who has never seen the conditions in front on the evening of a big battle, and whose experience is taken from books and maps, considers that divisions can be moved about from place to place in half an hour. I don't suppose the order can reach the brigade by 9.35, and goodness knows if it will get down to the company commanders at all; if it does, they will not have had time to collect and reorganise their companies. The Tanks are all scattered and disorganised, and will require to be collected and overhauled. The resistance of the Germans in front of the 6th Division was very fine; they never gave a yard although both their flanks were turned. This caused us great annoyance all day, and made a great difference to the success of the operations, and was no doubt partly the cause of the Guards losing direction. Losses in to-day's battle were about 23,000. Guards' Division, 40 officers killed, 122 wounded; other ranks, 4,000. The losses of the 14th Division were higher.

September 16. As I expected, the troops were unable to carry out the attack at 9.35, except the 3rd Corps, which made some progress. I don't believe the others attempted it seriously; they spent the day in reorganising and consolidating. The Tanks were collected and reorganised. Our aeroplanes reported the enemy were hurrying up reinforcements in motor-buses, but so far no counter-attack has been made. I have always thought that counter-attacks, unless in very exceptional circumstances, were a waste of life, and that reserves were far better employed in digging a fresh line. The Germans seem to think this too. They have never put in a counter-attack of any size during the whole of this battle, and have persistently dug new lines and put up the most determined resistance in each, every time inflicting very heavy loss on us for all ground gained. It makes no difference to the Germans whether we are here or five miles further on; the ground is worth nothing, merely poor chalk soil, without even a town of any importance.

September 18. The weather has turned very wet and the next general attack, which was to have been in conjunction with the French, has had to be postponed. The roads have ceased to exist as such, and it is quite impossible to get ammunition up to the guns in sufficient quantities. The ammunition for the heavies is being brought forward as far as possible on the railway, which has now been pushed on into Montauban. Owing to this great difficulty, the attack is postponed until 23rd; should this rain continue, it may be necessary to make a further postponement.

September 20. The enemy delivered a very strong counter-attack on the French position on our right from Le Priez Farm to 1,000 yards south of Bouchavesnes. It was repulsed everywhere with very heavy losses to the enemy, who only succeeded in gaining a temporary footing in Bouchavesnes, from which he was at once ejected. The forces engaged were thought to be three divisions, the 212th, 213th and 214th. The latter, which had been newly formed of three

regiments withdrawn from different parts of the Western front, had been sent to Frankfurt-on-Main, and a few hours after its arrival there was suddenly sent back to the Western front, instead of proceeding to Russia. It was brought straight to the Somme area, and put straight into the attack, without any previous reconnoitring of the ground. Prisoners state that the artillery preparation by their batteries was not good, and that they were decimated by the French artillery. It has been a very successful day for our Allies, and I think has accounted for a lot of Germans.

September 23. The last two days have been ideal, and I feel it is a great pity the next attack was postponed so long. The Germans appear to be massing some very considerable force in front of us, and it is more than possible now that we have captured all the high ground and observation, they may be going to make a determined effort to turn us out of it. If this is the case our next attack should very seriously upset their scheme.

September 24. We are attacking the villages of Gaudecourt, Lesboeufs, and Morval, and the line of trenches connecting them at 12 noon to-morrow. The French are attacking on our right from Le Priez Farm northwards. It is hoped thus to cut off Combles entirely. If the French attack is successful they will push on to Sailly-Saillisel. The bombardment has been going on all to-day and the observation has been very fair. If the co-operation between the artillery and infantry is good, we ought to stand every chance of gaining our objectives.

September 25. With the exception of the village of Gaudecourt, we gained all our objectives. It is important to have got Morval, which we wanted more than Lesboeufs or Gaudecourt, as it is next to the French and necessary for their operations. The French, however, have been less successful than usual; they captured Rancourt, but failed to get Frégicourt, on account of enfilade machine-gun fire from a strong point on their right flank, near St. Pierre Wood. The attack from Bouchavesnes to the Somme did not make very much progress, but no more details have reached us yet. As far as we are concerned, it has been a successful day unless our casualties, which we have not yet heard, are out of proportion to our gains, and the casualties inflicted on the enemy. About 500 prisoners have at present got back to the various depôts, but no doubt a large number are being detained to carry in the wounded.

September 26. More details of yesterday's fighting are now to hand, and our right division has succeeded in joining up with the French left behind Combles, as had been intended yesterday. The operations of Cavan's 14th Corps seem to have been particularly successful, and over 1,000 prisoners were taken by this Corps alone, whose casualties were a little over 2,000. The enemy resistance in some places seems to have been particularly feeble; the enemy infantry even leaving their trenches with their hands up before our assaulting columns reached them.

5 p.m. Events have developed during the day. The Germans holding us up in front of Gaudecourt have surrendered, and our troops have occupied the village. Very little resistance was met, and cavalry patrols were at once pushed

forward 1,200 yards in front of the infantry, to get in touch with the enemy. News has just come in that the reserve army has taken Thiepval; all details are at present lacking. I do trust these successes will be really pushed home this time, as the Bosch seems demoralised. He attempted a counter-attack from Sailly-Saillisel towards Lesboeufs, but when it came under artillery fire the enemy fled in disorder, even, it is said, throwing away arms and equipment. The capture of Thiepval is the village itself; the two strong redoubts on the high ground north of it have still to be dealt with. The enemy appear to be holding their next and only line strongly, it runs in front of Le Transloy. To attack it will mean a separate operation and thorough bombardment, I am afraid. Before doing this I understand we are to gain ground on our left, and so widen the front of our next attack.

September 27. The 3rd Corps are to attack Le Sars, Eaucourt-l'Abbaye, and the double line of trenches in front of them. If these objectives are gained an attack eastward of the whole 4th Army, in conjunction with an attack by the French 6th Army on Sailly-Saillisel, will be made.

October 1. The attack of the 3rd Corps progressed favourably; our troops have entered Le Sars and captured both lines of trenches in front of it. They are, however, held up by the trench in front of Eaucourt-l'Abbaye. Two Tanks were sent up to deal with this, and were reported by the contact aeroplane to be doing well, and driving the Germans up the trench. Unfortunately they both broke down, and had to be evacuated by their crews. We managed, however, to get into Eaucourt-l'Abbaye, but were bombed out by the enemy, our store of bombs having unluckily been blown up by a German shell. However, we are on the north and east of it, and we shall, I hope, be able to join up behind it.

October 3. Yesterday was very wet and very little was done, the artillery of both sides was almost silent, as there was no observation. This afternoon we joined up behind Eaucourt-l'Abbaye, but I fancy, myself, that the Bosch evacuated the place on finding us round it on three sides. However, this shows that he is not fighting as well as he used to.

October 6. We are having the greatest difficulties with our communications over ground where all roads have been entirely destroyed; the difficulty of getting ammunition to the guns is appalling, and of getting back the wounded, some of whom have to be carried on stretchers for three miles through mud in some places knee-deep. Until things improve operations will be impossible. The field gunners are using 14 horses on to one limber (containing 30 rounds) and then it very often sticks. The heavy ammunition lorries are up to their axles in mud, and often stick for hours, blocking all traffic. The effects, and misery, of fighting a battle under these conditions cannot be conceived. Owing to the impossibility of getting up ammunition the guns have been forced to ease down their fire. We are to attack Le Sars to-morrow and push our line forward along the whole front about 1,000 yards on to higher ground, but not to attack the German entrenched line in front of Le Transloy.

October 7. I had a good view of the fight near Flers. We captured Le Sars, and took there about 700 prisoners; our advance to the south of this, however, was held up, and, as far as one could judge, was not pushed home very vigourously. The 6th Bavarian Division holding that sector proved good, while the Lehr Division in Le Sars did not show very high *morale*. It will be necessary to give the 6th Bavarian Division a good bombardment as soon as ammunition can be got up. A Company Sergeant-Major in 23rd Division deserted to the enemy last night, and it appears from prisoners' statements that he gave away the time of our attack. It is sad for the reputation of the British Army. We have his name and should he be foolish enough to return to England after the war he will, of course, be shot. The French attack on our right was successful in taking its first objectives and pushed forward to the outskirts of Sailly-Saillisel. I have not yet heard what sort of resistance they met with.

October 12. Owing to the bad state of the roads, and the consequent difficulty of getting up ammunition, no operation has taken place since the 7th. The light railways, however, have pushed forward, and these, we hope, will make a great difference. The Germans have shown no activity. We are to attack on the 13th the Butte de Warlencourt, and the high ground in front of the new Le Transloy line, in order to get nearer to the latter, as we are at present too far away from it to attack it to advantage. The enemy have only bad trenches just in front of us before the Le Transloy line, but the ground behind it overlooks them, and rifle and machine-gun fire can be brought to bear on us from long range.

October 13. The attack to-day has made very little progress, but owing to the fact of the clouds being low, and both the contact patrol aeroplanes forced to fly low, and being hit by the enemy in consequence, details are at present lacking. The French attack on Sailly-Saillisel has been equally unsuccessful. On the 3rd Corps front, in the direction of the Butte de Warlencourt, no progress was made at all, and on the 15th and 14th Corps fronts there was little advance. The enemy appear to have opened their artillery barrage quickly and well.

(Note.—Losses about 6,000.)

October 14. We are back in our own trenches on the whole front of yesterday's attack. It appears that the attack was unable to proceed owing to intense long range machine-gun fire from the higher ground, 1,500 yards in rear. These machine-guns, being so far back, were unhurt by our artillery barrage, which preceded our infantry, and was reported to be good. They were able to keep up rapid fire through our barrage. This is a change of tactics on the part of the enemy, facilitated by the lie of the ground. Up to now he has had the bulk of his machine-guns well forward, and they have, in consequence, received the full force of our barrage. It is very difficult to see how this new plan will be dealt with, as it is impossible to keep the whole front of an attack under heavy artillery fire as far back as a mile. If only the Rumanians would use their machine-guns as well as the Bosches do, and not run away, it would be quite impossible for the enemy to advance in Transylvania as he is doing. The Army Commander

held a conference to-day to discuss what we are to do next. Yesterday was a sad failure, coming as it has when it looked as if the *morale* of the enemy was at last getting less good.

October 15. We are, I understand, to try and advance our line on the 17th in two places, and in the meantime to bombard the enemy's trenches. I doubt if we shall succeed, and I fancy H. R. is not very sanguine. However G.H.Q. orders the attack to be continued.

October 17. The attack was delivered at 3.30 a.m. after a pouring wet night. It met with only partial success. Some trenches were gained, and were immediately retaken by the enemy. The *morale* of our troops does not appear to have been very high. The Germans do not intend us to gain the next ridge, and I am very doubtful whether we can. Weather conditions are getting worse and worse, and our men are tired. G.H.Q. are pressing, I gather, for the attack to be continued at once; I don't gather the Army Commanders are in favour of this, and the Corps Commanders certainly are not. They contend, rightly I am sure, that we should have remained on the high ground that we captured on 15th September, leaving the Germans in possession of the low ground in front. As it is we have taken the low ground, and I very much doubt whether we have got enough impetus to get up the next rise, which the enemy is defending most obstinately.

Rumania and the General Situation. Rumanian strategy appears to have been very bad, and what is far worse, the fighting value of her troops seems to be *nil*. When she entered the war she agreed, and rightly I should think, to rush Transylvania before it was properly defended, and to leave the Dobrudja in a state of defence. The Germans did the obvious, and got Bulgaria to attack in the Dobrudja, in order to hinder the invasion of Transylvania. This attack succeeded in its object, and frightened the Rumanians, who immediately transferred troops from Transylvania to the Dobrudja front. This is what Germany wanted, and she immediately attacked in Transylvania, with six Austro-Hungarian and three German Divisions. The Rumanian forces were larger than these, but they seem to have put up very poor resistance, and at once retreated to the passes. Now even if the Germans do not succeed in forcing the passes, they will be able to hold them there with very small forces, and the entry of Rumania into the war will have benefited the Entente hardly at all. As a result of all this, the civilian strategists at home are screaming for a large force to be sent from here to Salonika. I understand that Ll. G., Balfour, and several others are strongly in favour of this. The C.I.G.S., and all soldiers are, of course, very much against it. In the first place there are no railways and very few roads. Without these to bring up ammunition, a large amount of artillery is useless; without artillery, attack against an enemy that will *fight* has no chance of success, and the attackers are mown down by machine-guns like grass. The Germans, too, can put their men into the train on this front, and send them straight through the Balkans without a stop, and in a quarter of the time in which we could get there.

October 23. We attempted to advance our line to-day about 500 yards, to within striking distance of the Le Transloy line. We were very unsuccessful,

and the French, who were trying to advance on our right, were equally unsuccessful. We have received bad news from those cowardly Rumanians, who continue to run away in the Dobrudja, and have now lost Costanza, their only seaport. If they lose Cernova and the bridge-head too, the situation will indeed be serious. The enemy, no doubt, will continue his double attack, and try to secure the boundless store of food and oil of Rumania, which would effectually undo any good the blockade is doing. If the Rumanians can't defend Costanza, I can see no reason why they should defend any other place. Russia, I hear, is sending troops to help, but like nearly all Entente schemes, they will probably arrive too late. Germany, besides her advantage of interior lines, has the great advantage also of controlling the whole strategy and organisation of the Central Alliance, under the Chief of the German General Staff, whereas in the Entente, each member plays its own cards, without any co-ordination, and generally wrong. Russia and Rumania should be organised by England and France, as Turkey and Bulgaria have been organised by Germany.

October 24. A terribly wet day and night. All our roads in the forward areas have collapsed, and the guns have had to ease down in consequence; 48 lorries were stuck fast between Fricourt and Montauban. The trenches are rivers and beyond conception, the men being waist deep in mud. It is almost impossible to get food and ammunition up into the front line. While these conditions last, operations are quite impossible. I only hope G.H.Q. can be made to realise it.

Douaumont Fort. Great news has just come in from the French that Douaumont Fort and village, also the village of Fleury, have been retaken, and more than 4,000 prisoners. This is a great moral blow to the Bosch; it took him weeks of terrible fighting to capture these, and now he has been driven out in four hours.

October 25. The Reserve Army delivered an attack with the 4th Canadian Division—a complete failure.

October 26. No operations on a large scale were undertaken. The 14th Corps attacked and captured Dewdrop trench in the early morning, taking two officers and 150 men prisoner. The troops which carried out the attack suffered very few casualties.

¶A letter to his step-father tells of a breathing-space at this point:

Hotel des Réservoirs, Versailles, 28th October, 1916.

. . . Where do you think I am?—why, at the above! The General came here for two days change and quiet yesterday and we return to-morrow. Fancy, it is ten years since that boiling hot day in August you and I came here together. I went to look at the seat you ornamented . . . near the tench pool, but all trace of decoration has gone, you will be surprised to hear! . . . I am hoping to get leave next month, it will be six months since I was at home; what an exile this is, and I see no end to it. Little did I think when I was here before, that next time I came I should be in uniform. I have seen Pippin several times lately. He has been over to see me twice, and I to see him once. He is more comfortable, as he has got a hut now. . . . Now we are allowed to clean shave, I have started growing a moustache!* . . .

*This was grown for a bet of 25 francs that he could not do so, but was not kept on long.

October 29. A lot more rain fell. Hazy trench was attacked this morning; the attack failed.

October 30. A quiet day. Enemy's artillery less active than usual. Heavy rain again fell.

November 1. Rained all night, no operations.

November 2. The 100th Brigade (33rd Division) carried out an attack in conjunction with the French 9th Corps on Boritzka and Hazy trenches. No progress was made by our troops on account of enfilade machine-gun fire. The French on our right gained their objectives.

¶A letter to his mother on the same day contains little but reference to home news:

. . . I am sorry, it is nearly a fortnight since you had a letter . . . Pippin came over yesterday, and spent most of the day with me. When he was over last, he made love to the Chief Engineer of this Army, and extracted from him somehow a magnificent hut, in which he now resides, to the great envy and surprise of the whole 2nd Cavalry Division. I had a long letter from Charlie Mylius two days ago, he does not seem to think that the Oleander has sunk. Anyhow it does not matter much if she has or not, as they are quite certain to have spoilt her.* . . . It rains here every day and the trenches are knee-deep in liquid mud. Fancy your having a hundred people in Brinsop Church, I expect Pam's addresses are first rate.† I still hope I may get leave this month, but it is by no means a certainty I am afraid. We have got the King of Montenegro of all people coming to lunch here to-day, a self-invited guest. He is over 75. I am afraid the Rumanian troops are first-rate hands at running away. It would be awful if the Bosches got all the food there is there, but the opinion is that they will not do so, as the Russians are helping. But I expect Mackensen will try and cross the Danube if he possibly can. If the Rumanians are worth 2d. it would not be a feasible operation in these days of machine-guns. I am rather afraid these long distance submarines will be a very great nuisance to us. It is so difficult to catch them in the Atlantic. It is splendid the moat becoming clear; if it is clear at this time of the year, it is certain to be clear in the summer-time.‡ . . .

November 3. An attack was carried out again on Boritza, which failed. Losses are heavy. During the afternoon the enemy counter-attacked Zenith trench from the direction of Eclipse trench; they failed to make any progress. He attacked again, however, in force just before dark, this time gaining a footing in Zenith trench, but was at once driven out, leaving 38 prisoners and four machine guns in our hands. Over 100 German corpses were counted in front of Zenith trench.

November 4. No event. A conference was held here to-day of Sir D. Haig, Sir Henry Rawlinson, and General Foch. I gather the latter wishes us to attack

*"Oleander" was Dick's launch on Lake Como, commandeered by the Italian military authorities.

†The National Mission was in progress at home, and Mr. Astley gave a series of addresses in connection with this in Brinsop Church.

‡The moat, dating from the 13th century, one of the chief beauties of Brinsop Court.

the Le Transloy line to-morrow, in conjunction with a French attack on Sailly and St. Pierre Vaast Wood. Sir H. R. would not agree to this, to the considerable annoyance of the French. He said it was quite impossible to attack the Le Transloy line until the intermediate positions were taken. As we had, during the last few days, made several unsuccessful attempts on these, the troops were not in a fit state to carry an attack as far as the line beyond what they had already failed to take. Sir H. R. agreed, however, to support the French attack by making another attack on the intermediate lines. Although conditions have improved the ground is still unfit to attack over, and the trenches are knee-deep in mud.

November 5. The French attack started well and most of their objectives were reached, but they were not able to hold them, and a German counter-attack regained the St. Pierre Vaast Wood. Much the same happened to us; we captured the much contested Butte de Warlencourt, but the Germans managed to regain it at once. We only succeeded in holding some small sections of the enemy's trenches which had been attacked. On the whole it was a thoroughly unsuccessful day. Casualties are not at present known. The failure, I am sure, was largely due to the dreadful state of the trenches and the mud. The troops were all tired out by these two things before they started to attack.

November 7. Sir Henry has written a strong letter to G.H.Q., deprecating the continuation of the offensive here under present conditions, which are not likely to improve before it freezes. The efficiency of the Army next spring will be endangered if the present losses in officers and N.C.O.'s continue. I am certain from this that the great battle of the Somme is over. We have, I am afraid, gained only a local success, which cannot be called a victory. At great cost we have driven the enemy back from very strong positions to a position 11,000 yards at the furthest point (from his old front line) on a frontage of 22,000 yards. It has cost us 400,000 casualties and an expenditure of 19,000,000 shells. We have caused the enemy about 200,000 casualties and prisoners. Our present front line is in a bad position, with 4,000 yards to walk to it in view of the enemy. The conquered ground on which the bulk of the Army is forced to live, has not a single building standing. Every house, every road, every tree has been destroyed. There is nothing but a sea of shell holes, each half full of water. Upon this desert of mud our men have to spend the winter.

¶The Diary ends here, and was not begun again. Through the four months' chronicle, with a vivid picture it presents of incessant labour, infinite pains in preparation, and sustained effort in action of the Allied Armies, of hope deferred and recurring disappointment, Dick's own character shines out in all that those who loved him knew so well, his unfailing courage and sense of duty, and his generous kindness. His judgment, clear and keen, measured the stupendous task that lay before our troops, without disguise, and it filled him, as has been shown, at times with something near despair,

while his whole nature revolted against the carnage and the terrible conditions of war, and yet, all among whom he lived through these days, at Army Headquarters, where no rosy illusions on the situation could be cherished, remember Dick always for his unfailing spirit. Sir Henry Rawlinson wrote of him:

. . . He was the soul of our Headquarter Mess and cast the sunshine of his cheery self on all who met him. To me he was almost as a son, and I owe him, and poor George Boscawen, who first suggested him as A.D.C., many happy days even in the hard times of war. . . .

¶ Another interlude of leave, more welcome than ever, came in this November, 1916. Dick wrote on the 8th to his mother:

. . . I am coming for leave somewhere about the 20th. I hope you and Pam will be able to arrange to come to Benham and I do hope also that you will be able to get hold of our Ruthie. It will be six months since I was at home before and have seen any of you. Oh! this vile war, soon it will be 1917 and no end even in sight. Pippin went away this morning, and will be more comfortable, and I hope also may get some leave, although I understand from him there are several in his Regiment who are due first. I should think he might get home for Xmas. The mud is quite awful and adds so much to the discomfort of the troops, but I don't think Picardy is so muddy as Flanders. . . . I have begun this sheet on the wrong side, so you will have some difficulty in finding your way about this letter. "Bother," as Unks would say. I wonder how you will like my moustache? . . . I love getting your letters, don't you please think I don't because I don't answer them. Best love to Pam. I am longing to see you.

Your ever loving Dick.

¶ The 17th found Dick on his way home, and the next day he and his mother and sister and Mr. Astley, arrived within ten minutes of each other at Benham, where they had a whole fortnight together. The Benham Visitors' Book shows many familiar signatures between 19th November and 2nd December. "Nipper" Sutton and his wife, the Townshend Boscawens, the Reginald Astleys, Lord Althorp, besides those of Sir Henry and Lady Rawlinson, and General Budworth, a member of the 4th Army H.Q. staff. Dick had plenty of shooting, and a day with the V.W.H. hounds, and found time to join in an entertainment for the wounded soldiers in the house besides. He had arranged that his mother, who was going on to London after his departure, should stay at his flat in South Audley Street, and writes of this soon after his return to France:

. . . I was so pleased to get your letter, and to hear you were comfortable at 41. . . . Neither of those three pictures were the Merevelt William of Orange.

Those three are all cheap pictures, but I liked the one of Peter the Great best, and that is the only one I shall keep. The Military Secretary is on leave, so I am doing his work *pro tem,* and am fairly *busy* (one *s*). I knew Philip would be going off south, so as to clear those areas of needless traffic. It will make a nice change for them. The Bosch is very quiet here and not at all aggressive. All his energies are employed in hunting the rabbit-like Rumanians. . . . I wear my new jersey* every day, it is most comfortably and exactly right in every way, just right. . . .

20th Dec. 1916.

. . . This is only just a line to wish you and everyone at Brinsop the best Christmas possible under present conditions. How I wish I was with you all, I am in mind if not in body. Pray God this will be the last we shall all be separated, and that 1917 will see the end of this awful business. Ll. George's speech wasn't bad, do you think? But I am sorry he did not put our peace terms more clearly in regard to reparation and guarantees for the future.† We saw the sun for the first time since I was on leave to-day, and very nice it was to see it, and the mud dried up for once. Give my very best love to all at Brinsop, and my very best wishes too.

NINETEEN-SEVENTEEN TO NINETEEN-EIGHTEEN

THE lull in active operations imposed by the state of the ground was employed on all sides by preparations for a renewal of hostilities in the spring, but of these, naturally, Dick could not write. Staff work was of a more routine order, and Dick, writing on 18th January, 1917, says:

. . . There is dreadfully little to say, anything of interest is always contrary to the censor, which is the great disadvantage we have this end, which you do not have yours. I do hope Uncle Gerald will be able to stop that aviation ground; it does seem too bad to have good land taken in the west of England where it cannot matter exactly where the aerodrome is. He ought to try and get some influential friend to take it up who can make a fuss about it in the highest quarters. . . . No, thank goodness, I have not had many letters of congratulation on the M.C., which is a blessing, especially when one has got it sitting in safety on the staff, and not for any act of gallantry. We have had a lot of snow here, but it is now thawing hard, and the slush is the limit. I do hope Pippin has turned up by now; I cannot make head or tail of his leave. It will be bad luck if Ruthie has to go back without seeing him. . . .

*One made by his mother.

†This refers to the Premier's speech at the Guildhall, in reply to veiled German overtures for peace, made through the medium of the Pope and President Wilson. The German military party proposed to retain Belgium and the French mining district round Lille, which was declared impossible to allow.

27th Jan. 1917.

. . . I suppose our Ruthie has now gone back to school, without seeing Pippin I am afraid. The cold here is intense, we have had 20 degrees of frost now three nights running, and the water in my jug this morning was frozen so hard I could not break it. The trenches are, of course, in much better condition, but the men feel the cold most awfully, I really don't know how they survive it. There has been quite good skating on the ponds here, but I am not a performer. The jersey and socks you made me are quite invaluable, and I wear them always. . . . Sir Henry hasn't told me when he is going for leave again, but I gather he will go some time next month. We have two Italian Officers attached here for a fortnight, one an artillery Colonel, and the other an infantry Major. They are both very nice fellows, and speak English and seem very keen on learning all they can. . . . I saw Woolly Leigh Bennett a little while ago; he is in the Pioneer battalion and was engaged in trying to clear the mud off a very muddy road. He said he was quite enjoying the novelty of it so far. That wouldn't last long, I told him. The Pioneer battalion does not go into the trenches except to dig and make alterations, and is far safer than the others, so I hope he will stay there. . . .

6th February.

. . . Oh, this cold; for three nights now we have had over 30 degrees of frost, and it is quite out of the question to begin to get this house even tepid. Coal is scarce and very bad, nearly all dust. We spend most of the day in our great-coats. The General gave me two days' leave to Paris last week to get things for the Mess. It was fearfully cold there; there is practically no coal, and even the hotel was not properly warmed. It is 70 miles, and the train took seven hours, with ten people in a first-class carriage. All fast trains have been taken off, and those left stop at every station. We are all rather sceptical about the Yanks really going to war, even if the Bosches do sink their ships, but I hope they will. They could anyhow help to pay. I gather Pippin's lot are out of the trenches some time ago. It was only the machine-gunners who went in for exercise into a pretty quiet bit of line, so I hope he has not had a bad time. I can't see why he should not have had leave from the trenches, everyone in the infantry does, of course. . . .

A week later Dick was in England on ten days' leave, which he spent among his family party at Benham. Philip's long delayed leave came off a few days before Dick's ended, and, for the first time since the war began, they were all together again. On the 26th Dick was due to return to France, but by a happy accident had one more day at home. He wrote from his flat in town to his mother, who had gone back to Brinsop that morning.

. . . I have missed my train. It was put on an hour without warning, so not my fault. It was most lovely being with you and Pam and Ruthie and Philip, all together once more. How I wish it had been for longer. I have told Hooper

Headquarters Staff, 4th Army, 1917.

Back Row (from left to right): Maj. A. P. W. Wedd. Lieut. Hon. Paul Methuen. Capt. Nesbitt. Capt. Gooch. Lieut.-Colonel Chater. Capt. Paget. Lieut.-Col. W. Pitt-Taylor. Capt. Snell. Col. Grazebrook. Lieut.-Col. Smyth-Osbourne. Capt. R. M. Weeks. Maj. Hon. George Boscawen.

Middle Row: Captain Sir Richard Sutton, Bart. Captain Smythe. Captain Hills. Lieut.-Colonel R. M. Luckock. Major E. A. Parker. Captain Burr. Colonel Fitzgerald. Major C. H. T. Thompson. Captain Gapain. Very Rev. C. W. Smith.

Front Row: Major Lord Hamilton of Dalziel. Archdeacon Southwell. Major-General R. W. H. Buckland. Major-General A. A. Montgomery. General Sir Henry Rawlinson, Bart. Maj.-General H. C. Holman. Maj.-General Sir M. U. O'Keefe. Lieut.-Col. W. Wilson. Col. R. G. Earle.

This Imperial War Museum Photograph (Crown Copyright) was taken at Villers-Carbonnel, 1917.

to expect you on Friday and have arranged for Pippin to have one of Lady Kingston's rooms. Very kind of me, isn't it!

So much love from your ever loving Dick.

H.Q., 4th Army, 4th March, 1917.

...Wasn't it a bit of luck the boat train being suddenly put on an hour. 500 other people missed it, and everyone was given a paper by the R.T.O. certifying that it was through no fault of their own. I went to the Bristols' dance in St. James' Square, and quite enjoyed myself, but they seem never to dance any waltzes, partly, I hope, because the band only consists of three, piano and two banjos. There was, of course, no supper and no flowers. Uncle Reg and Auntie Nee came to stay as had been previously arranged, they were very surprised to see me again when they got to 41. It was awfully nice having them there, and we went and chose some bits of furniture next morning....You are quite right, one's leave is over before one can turn round. I hope you were comfortable and well fed at the flat....The Germans are busy burning villages and destroying everything, which indicates that they intend a further retreat, probably to a strong line they have 12 miles east of their present one. It is a clever move to give us a desert to cross and live in, and a few miles of ground don't matter much....

¶To H.D.A.:

March, 1917.

...I went over to lunch at Villers Bretonneux to-day with your friend Delacour and his Mother. I have never seen such nice aviaries from the point of view of seeing the birds. He has an enormous number, but lost a great many in the frost which is very distressing for him. There is a small park, part of which is divided up into enclosures for his cranes, rheas and ostriches. He has no Manchurian cranes, but all the other ordinary varieties. Immediately in front of the house are some very ugly cement pools, in which he has got some very nice ducks. The aviaries consist of a small walled kitchen garden with a path down the centre. The whole thing is caged in, so that if any birds escape from their own pens into the passage they cannot get away altogether. All along one wall is the enclosed aviary, beautifully heated, which has a glass roof and large fixed cages all round the walls like a library of birds. On one side the larger birds are kept and they have doors into the compartments of the outer aviary—on the other side are small tropical birds who never go out. The cages are all fixtures and of different sizes. It is really excellent, because from outside it only looks like a walled kitchen garden, which of course it once was.... Madame Delacour seems a very nice woman, of middle age....The Bosches have left us, for the Hindenburg line, I suppose. Anyhow they have all gone, and these wonderful victories of the newspapers have consisted in walking into empty destroyed villages without firing a shot. They have filled some of them up with civilian inhabitants from the large towns they still occupy, in order to get rid of them and not have to feed them. They have cut down all the trees at Peronne, as they failed to burn them....I have got another vile cold, and long for California. I think we could start a decorating business, and garden architecture! These

Yankees will be sure to spend pots of money on their houses after the war. Probably quite a good thing could be made of it. We could have an office and shop at San Francisco and pay a good business man to run it—Astley, Sutton & Co. Ltd. !!...

¶ To his Mother:

21st March, 1917.

...Thank you very much for your letters. I am afraid it is some time since you had one from me. Events have been moving, as you have seen from the papers. The enemy have evacuated their old lines, and their main body has retired to the Hindenburg line, the position of which I have already told you. We entered Peronne (described by the ½d. Press as a great victory) without firing a shot, and it has been the same with the other villages. The Germans have removed every trifle worth moving and have destroyed the rest, even burning the furniture in the village streets. They left the inhabitants, as they preferred we should feed them, but they even destroyed the beds they slept on. It is most curious to ride about and see miles of deserted country in front of one. In the meantime, what is old Hindenburg up to? He has saved 15 divisions at least by this retirement, and must have a striking force of at least 500,000 men for something. The great question is—where will he use it? The alternatives appear to be Russia, Italy and Ypres. Most people think it will be one of the two latter. But he is almost certain to attack, and that in tremendous force, with enormous artillery concentration and limitless ammunition. Compared with this attack, which will probably commence, if he intends to attack, within the next fortnight, even Verdun will be eclipsed. I am inclined to think Italy will be the victim. The Italians are softer stuff than ourselves or the French, and a decisive result might be obtained. The Russians, on the other hand, although a bad army in a modern sense, can always retire into tractless country and avoid a decision. Our positions at Ypres are, as they always have been, overlooked by the enemy, and this makes it an attractive spot for an attack. A decisive victory there would give him Calais and Boulogne, and the uppermost thought in a German's mind is hatred of us. It will be very interesting to see what does actually happen in the next few weeks....

5th April, 1917.

...I have just been to London for 48 hours, to do commissions for the General and several others. It was rather nice to get back even for that momentary time, all spent in shopping. However, I popped into lunch with Bossy and took Gladys to a detective play, which we both enjoyed. I went home at such short notice or should have tried to drag you up. I had a pretty vile journey back and did not get to London till after 10, and was afraid I would end it by not being able to get into my flat, as I had not been able to give Hooper notice, and as it was Sunday could not wire from Folkestone. However, all was well. We are moving into tents any moment, 30 miles from any shopping town, so I had to get a large supply of tinned luxuries and camp stores. I do wish it would turn warm, it snowed here all yesterday. I don't fancy the Bosches mean to retreat much further without a great deal of forcible persuasion, and it will be very difficult to force them. Pippin's lot have not been in any of this fighting with

the Bosch rearguards. I am sure the Bosches will hate America coming in and it is very good to think of all these Hamburg-America liners being used for the benefit of the Allies. . . .

Headquarters, Advanced 4th Army, 19th April, 1917.

. . .We are now in camp; not tents, I am glad to say, but quite comfortable wood and corrugated iron huts, and as the Bosches have left masses of wood all over the place lying on the ground, and rafters from the villages they have destroyed, we have plenty of fuel to keep us warm during this vile weather. The Arras attack was most successful on the first day, and all the important places, *i.e.*, the high ground (Vimy Ridge and Monchy le Preux) were taken. The Bosches did not fight well on the whole. The second, third, and following days are always much more difficult for the attackers, but as we get such splendid observation of the Bosch positions from the Vimy Ridge, I hope we may be able to force him back further; he will find it difficult to retain Lens, I think. We are so far away,* we do not hear many details. Several Cavalry Regiments were used, including, I believe, the 12th, who lost some officers, but I hope Philip's M.G. squadron may not have gone into action. As far as we are concerned here, we are near St. Quentin—*very* near—but unluckily there is a very strong line of German defence in front of it. The French made a very big attack yesterday in Champagne, as you saw, but were not quite so successful as they hoped to be, as the Germans were ready for them and in great strength. . . . They succeeded, however, in taking 10,000 prisoners, but I have not heard what their own losses were, and I don't suppose we shall. . . .

¶To H.D.A.:

29th April, 1917.

My dearest Pam.—Thank you so much for your birthday letter. I do trust this will be the last birthday in exile. I expect by now you are entertaining your party of smart young ladies. I have just cut the portrait of one of them out of this week's "Tatler"; it is typical, isn't it? . . . a real chatter going on, can't you see it? Do ask her what the joke was. I am expecting Pippin over to lunch here to-day; it will be awfully nice to see him. At last we have some warm weather and our camp is very nice; we are here in huts, not tents now, which is much nicer. We are each making a little garden at the door of our own huts, and dig up and plant flowers from the destroyed French villages all round us. I am sending you a book on California which I have been reading. I am afraid we shall not escape from all worries there, especially with servants. I thought the book rather amusingly written. How awfully nice your services at Brinsop Church must be. There really is no comparison between High Church and Low Church, is there? I am sure the boring Low Church services are nearly always the cause of bad congregations. I wonder if old Cuthbert will be able to come and stay with you now Easter is over. We do not hear many details here of the Arras Battle. Very heavy fighting seems to be in progress, as the Germans have brought up a great many reinforcements. I am

* The Camp was at Villers Carbonnel, near Peronne.

afraid from all accounts the Russians will not be much use to us. It is dreadfully sad about Phil Wroughton;* he was so awfully nice, and one of the few nice neighbours near Benham. I can't help feeling this fighting in Egypt is rather a waste of time, and that if we had any diplomatists worth twopence we could get the Turks out of it. Best love to all. Yours very lovingly, Dick.

10th May, 1917.

. . . I have not much news to tell you, although it is some time since I wrote, I am afraid. Philip will be coming down to these parts soon, and to this Army. The Germans appear to be fighting very hard at Arras, and progress there is slow or *nil* at present, but one does not get very much news. The heat is very nice, but this camp is very hot, as the huts are corrugated tin outside, and there are no trees, the Germans having cut them down. I had no idea they meditated all dogs having to be put out of the way, that would indeed have been too awful for you. I am afraid even the increased licenses will be a bore, and it won't be easy to give any away. What will happen to the numerous dogs you have given to cottagers?. . . I hear from Norton that Hine's brother, and another of the gamekeepers, Sims by name, have been killed in the Arras battle. The Royal Berks always seem to catch it. The Household Battalion did very well, I hear; they lost about 160. The Turnip had a very lucky escape. I think it is just possible Rawly might go for a few days leave next month, as he is not very busy, things being quiet in these parts. He hasn't said so, it is only "my idea." It would be jolly nice . . . if he did. All our gardens we have made are looking quite nice now, and the glorious weather on the top of the rain has brought the things on like mad. . . .

¶The Army Commander's Staff had laid out the strips of ground surrounding their temporary quarters as flower gardens, and Dick succeeded in producing a miniature lawn in his that was the only patch of grass to be seen for miles and on which no one was allowed to walk.

¶To H.D.A.:

17th May, 1917.

. . . I am afraid it is a dreadfully long time since I last wrote; and I have not yet thanked you for sending me on Mrs. Maude's letters and the other correspondence about California. I think Pebble Beach must be charming; but the prices for land seem very high—if one only buys a small plot someone else may come and build something appalling quite close and in full view. One does not want to own land, but at the same time it would be a great bore to be built round and hemmed in with ugly villas. However we shall see what it is like when we go there. Philip is quite close here now and came to breakfast yesterday. The King of the Belgians came to lunch so we were honoured by two distinguished visitors. Sir Harry went to French G.H.Q. for week-end; and I got permission to go to Paris, and by the greatest luck found Tommy Boscawen

* Philip M. N. Wroughton, Major, Berks Yeomanry, killed in Palestine.

there, and we hired a car and went to Versailles on Sunday afternoon. Tootie Hargreaves as was, was also there with her husband; it was nice seeing her again. It is very quiet down here and Sir H. is not busy, in fact he might just as well go on leave, I do wish he would. . . . The Russian news gets worse and worse; I am afraid the Army is quite out of hand and fast becoming a rabble. Germans are already pouring over here from the Russian front; I should think the whole lot will soon be here. God knows what will happen then. If the Yanks had not come in I think we should lose the war. . . . Our gardens are really looking awfully pretty now. . . .

19th May, 1917.

. . . I shall get home on leave, bar accidents, some time next week; I don't know what day exactly. . . but I will wire to you or Pam when I get to London. I am looking forward most awfully to seeing you both. Ruthie I fear I shall not see, as I suppose there are no trains these days. This will be my last leave for many months, I am afraid; in fact I hope it may be the end of the war next time. . . .

This leave was very short, a week in all, but every moment of it a delight. Dick met his mother at Swindon on her way from Hereford, and motored her on to Compton Beauchamp (the Reginald Astleys' house) for the night, and on again next morning to Benham, picking up "Tibbie" and Mr. Cuthbert Trower on the way to spend the rest of the day with them. The weather was deliciously warm, and the Mayfly at its best. Most of the long afternoons were spent by Dick and his family party fishing or on the lake. The days passed all too quickly, and Dick wrote again from Villers Carbonnel on the 4th June:

. . . It is always so depressing getting back to this country from leave, especially as I have got toothache again and a very swollen face, so I am not looking my best! We are having an O.E. dinner to-night for the 4th Army. Some 130 officers have sent in their names, including a Lieut. Astley, 12th Lancers. Do you know him? I think he must be some relation! We have put up tents in the square at Peronne, as there is not a whole house in the town. . . . It is very hot indeed in our camp and one misses having no shade very much indeed. Methuen has not come back from Varenna yet; he is due back here to-night, but I don't know whether he will turn up or not. I hope so, it is a bore being single-handed with toothache. Our gardens here have made enormous strides during the short time we have been away; I think my bed is much the best of all. I wish you could see our camp. . . .

The Eton dinner was an even greater success than that of the previous year, and the large marquee in the market-place of Peronne held a very festive party. Philip, whose quarters were at some considerable distance, was unable to find a conveyance on the day and

set off on foot, getting a lift later on the road. He arrived late, but his place had been kept next to his brother, and Dick, toothache notwithstanding, was, as ever, the life and soul of the party, and, as organiser of the dinner, wrote the telegram to Eton from the 130 O.E.'s present.

¶To H.D.A.: 14th June, 1917.

. . . I have been meaning to write to you ever since I came back, and tell you how much I loved seeing you. I really enjoyed our bathe at Tumbling Bay more than anything since the war started; it was, as you say, just like old times—wafted back fifteen years for a few minutes. It was all much too short, and this leave seemed to be over as soon as it had begun. I think I must really get an aeroplane after the war; one could pop over to Brinsop in an hour or less. They have got them most wonderful owing to the war. . . . I have had the most vile toothache since I got back and have had to have the rest of that tooth pulled out. I found our gardens here had come on enormously during the week I was away. Paul Methuen and wife enjoyed themselves very much at Varenna and admired your painted ceilings. He tells me the roses on the lower terrace are hanging round down to and in the water, and the Pergola is completely covered!! Of course when I was there three and a half years ago it was hardly covered at all. I have had a letter from Marchese and Marchesa Botto,* mostly full of *saluti!* They loved having someone in the house again. I have seen Squeaky once since I got back, and hope to do so again shortly. . . .

¶Another flying visit to England is told of a few days later.

¶To his Mother: 19th June, 1917.

. . . Here I am again in the old country for 48 hours. What a surprise! I came over with Sir Henry last night in a destroyer, and from Dover to London in a special train, a novel and most rapid mode of progression in these days. Sir Douglas Haig and General Trenchard, commanding the R.F.C., came too, and some of the Staff, ten in all. There is an important conference over here, but of course you must not mention it *to anyone*. I also seize this opportunity to tell you I shall be living at Dunkirk in about ten days' time. But this, of course, is to be kept secret from people over here, although it will soon be known in the B.E.F. I saw old Bos to-day and had lunch with him. The heat here to-day is something terrific, I wish I could get out of it, but Sir H. may go back at any moment, but he may not till the day after to-morrow. My very best love, I wish you were here, although London isn't its best in this temperature. . . .

4th July, 1917.

. . . I have moved, and like the change at present very much; I think most changes are welcome in this war, and this one in particular has much to recommend it. Provisions are very much easier to get. I did not see Philip before I left. . . .

* Michele and Celestina, servants at the Villa dei Cipressi.

41 South Audley Street, 23rd July, 1917.

. . . Once more at the above. I arrived at 7.0 p.m. with Sir Henry and leave to-morrow at 2.35, after Sir H. has been to a War Office meeting. . . . It is really very hard luck it being Sunday as none of my few remaining friends are in London, so I have just returned from a lonely dinner at the Club. I had hoped perhaps Bossy might have been in London. We came over in a T.B.D. from Dunkirk to Folkestone, which I enjoyed very much; the sea was like glass, and the Captain wanted to establish a record . . . so we fairly flew. . . . I like Dunkirk very much; we are about 2½ miles out of the town, right on the sea. London seems deserted. Is it because it is Sunday?—I suppose so. I wish you were here.

About this time the débâcle resulting from the Russian Revolution set in on the Eastern front, and large bodies of German troops, thus released, were employed against Italy, and although it was too late in the year to retrieve the ground that the Allies had gained on the Western front during the summer campaign, the supplies of every kind now obtained enabled the Germans to prepare effectually for their final attack in force in France and Flanders that so nearly succeeded in the spring of 1918. Dick's summary of the chances of the direction of German strategy in his letter of 21st March, 1917, and his estimate of the blow to be struck by the enemy, proved accurate in their forecast.

To H.D.A.:

30th July, 1917.

. . . How splendid our Squax being at home. Do send me a copy of your letter to Marie Corelli; I would so like to see it. Several people here were delighted to hear someone had written her a tight one as she deserves. Our Chaplain-General here, Archdeacon Southwell, was much amused to hear of your battle with the Bishop. He started life as a rector in Hereford, and had an awful row with the Bishop over wearing vestments more than 25 years ago. He is a most charming man—the Archdeacon, not the Bishop. I think he has some hope he may succeed the Bishop, it would be most awfully nice for you if by any chance he does. We dig sand castles on the sand every evening for exercise; two castles with the same number working on each; the side whose castle survives the incoming tide the longest wins 'mid cheers and great excitement as a wave sweeps away the castle of the opposite side. Generals, Colonels, Captains, and subalterns all digging away like mad. The French think us as mad as hatters, of course, but it amuses us. The bathing is rather spoilt by the jelly fish, which are apt to sting one. Father Philip seems to have enjoyed himself so much at Brinsop; I had a letter from him yesterday, it is a pity he missed Pippin. I am afraid this is a very dull letter, but I have no news . . . how I wish I was with you all. . . .

2nd August, 1917.

. . . Sir Henry went over to see the Admiral at Dover last Sunday, and I also. I went and saw Irene, who has a house about 20 miles off, at Birchington. I wanted to see Jack Althorp also, near Canterbury, but time and petrol were too short. We went across in a T.B.D. and came back in a hospital transport; the first was very quick, and the latter very comfortable. There is a certain talk of leave in the near future, I do hope it may come off, it is so much nicer in September than the winter. I see Oliver Villiers quite often, and like him very much; he is also very useful as he knows this place, and is in with all the Navy fellows. I hope the latter are going to bring my little canoe over for me.* We play polo on the sand every other evening when the tide is right, and have great fun. We have played several matches against other units. It is blowing like the devil to-day, which is very unpleasant, as the driving sand blows in everywhere. I have no news; things are pretty quiet here as far as we are concerned. . . . Since writing this last night the leave star has been shining even more brightly, and it looks as though I should go on leave next week or the week after. . . .

The flying visit to Birchington came as a delightful surprise to Lady Levinge. She had taken her little boy (Sir Richard Levinge) to play on the shore, and saw a tall figure in Staff uniform coming to meet them, throwing his cap in the air as he caught sight of them. Dick, discarding his field boots and cap, borrowed sandshoes from a well-grown kitchen maid in his cousin's house, and a straw hat from the nursery, and built sand castles with his godson, "the Dicklet," for the rest of the afternoon.

Dick was again in England before this letter of 23rd August to his mother arrived, and travelling on Sunday (the 26th August), could not telegraph, and so arrived, unannounced, at Brinsop late in the evening and found, besides the family party, his old friend Miss Ethel Trew staying there, and his uncle Sir Gerald Corbet. After a few days Dick carried everyone off with him to Benham where they spent the remainder of his ten days' leave. Dick's General came down for some partridge shooting, and Lady Rawlinson with him.

Dick had begun to feel that he had been long enough on Staff duty, but left the initiative on the matter, naturally, to his superior officers, and a request for his return to his Regiment came sooner than he had expected. Shortly after his return from leave he wrote of this to his mother:

* Dick wished to send this canoe to the Lake of Como.

1st Life Guards. B.E.F., 12th September, 1917.

. . .You will be surprised to see the above address. Soon after getting back from leave, my Regiment asked me to come back to them as adjutant, which I decided to do. It is a great change, but in many ways I quite like it. I had felt for some time that it was high time I had a change. I am quite busy at present getting into everything again. We have quite fair billets, but of course not quite like Army H.Q. I hope I shall see Philip a good deal more, as he is not very far from here. . . . I have been on the rush the last few days, or I would have written sooner. . . .

17th Sept. 1917.

. . . I am quite settling down here now, and in some ways quite like the change. It is nice seeing some of one's old friends. . . . I find as adjutant I have quite a good deal to do, until I get really used to it, and everything is strange. If only I had known about this change when I was on leave, I think Sir H. would have given me an extra few days in England. Leave is going quite well for Regimental Officers, and if it goes on equally well I hope I may get home again soon after Xmas. Pippin is about 20 miles from here, so I don't see much hope of seeing him at present. I told you he hoped to get leave to go to Varenna before long, I wonder if he will succeed, . . . as it does not fill up a place on the Channel boat it would not be counted as leave. The young Officers who have joined since I have been away seem a very nice lot. . . .

Sir Henry Rawlinson was very grieved to lose the services of his A.D.C. who, in the General's own phrase, had been almost a son to him. He wrote of this to Dick's mother:

. . . It is a matter of great regret to me to have to allow Dick to go back to his Regiment, but as his Commanding Officer wanted his services as Adjutant of the Regiment, I was unwilling to stand in the way of his promotion. The Cavalry will not be doing much this winter, and in the position of adjutant I do not think you need be anxious regarding his safety, though I should of course have preferred to have kept him under my own eye. . . . We all miss Dick dreadfully in the mess. . . .

Lady Rawlinson joined in her husband's regrets, adding:

. . . I am sure you would be pleased to hear all the nice things said of Dick, and how *truly* sorry they are to lose him. Harry is so devoted to him, and only consented to letting him go because it was promotion. He won all hearts, and will be so missed by everybody.

Chequers Court had passed within a few years from Mrs. Frankland Russell Astley to her eldest son, and then to his only son, Henry Jacob Delaval Astley, who was killed in an aeroplane accident not long after he came of age, in 1912. He was married but left no child, and the entail ending with his life, he left the property to his widow, who sold it to Sir Arthur Lee (afterwards Lord Lee

of Fareham). Sir Arthur Lee had previously rented the place on a lease for his own life and that of his wife. Chequers had been Mr. Hubert Astley's home—had the entail been continued, he stood next in succession to his nephew, and if an opportunity had been given, Dick would have bought the property rather than Brinsop Court, but the business was carried through privately, and Sir Arthur Lee announced his intention about this time of bequeathing Chequers to the nation. Dick wrote on the subject to his stepfather when the matter was published:

October, 1917.

... So Chequers has gone to the nation as I rather expected. I hope the P.M.'s of the future will not be vulgar cads like the present one, and that they will be helped and soothed by its vibrations. I am sure you must feel rather a pang about it, even I do. It holds all the memories of my earliest childhood. I had always intended to buy it back from .... secretly, and if it had not been for the war and the failure of that vile hotel scheme of Bingham's I should very likely have done so. I am sure Lee did not give a very large sum. With his and her life leases on it, it was not marketable to anyone but themselves and us. However, there it is, and I think Lee's scheme is very well thought out, don't you? I wonder if any of us will live to see a P.M. in residence there. The Lees are both young, but I suppose I might. I think the pictures in "Country Life" are excellent—aren't they? The weather here is vile, and the thought of the winter ahead is damnable—oh, why can't we get off to California! "Ma" seems to have had a most interesting time at Eton, and seen things that I never even knew existed....

¶To his Mother:

25th October, 1917.

... I am afraid you will be wondering why you have not heard from me: we have been on the move and have just finished a three days' march, and have arrived in quite nice billets and a very pretty country with rolling hills and big beech woods which are looking quite lovely with the autumn tints. The country is very wild and very thinly populated; only a few very old men and women here, when they die I should think there would be no more. Half the houses in the village are derelict and make good stables for our horses. The house Regimental Headquarters are in is quite good. We have a dining-room, sitting-room, and a sort of ante-room place which I use as an office. The Colonel, second-in-command and myself have bedrooms in the house also. We have moved seven times since I returned to the Regiment, but are not likely to move again for some time, I should think. I like the Colonel very much, he is charmimg.... Cooncan is very well and moderately comfortable. If he had stayed at Army H.Q. he would probably have been killed, as a bomb was dropped on the stables which killed and wounded ten horses.... Time passes pretty quickly, we do a certain amount of training and field days, and I have quite enough to occupy me with Regimental administration. I have got a few days Paris leave at the end of

the week and am going with Somers, who is in very good form. I don't know where Philip's Division is, I am afraid still some way off. Is he going on leave home soon? as, of course, leave on the Continent does not count. I must stop, as it is time for our dinner, which we have early and generally play a rubber of bridge afterwards. I play chess also with the Regimental Sergeant-Major, who, I am sorry to say, beats me two out of three games. . . .

7th November, 1917.

. . . I am now about 8 miles N.E. of F. so you were quite right in your guess where I was. I got back from Paris last Sunday. I had a very jolly time there, Somers is a delightful companion, and knows so many French people. The day I left I was asked to go to a shoot about an hour's motor drive from Paris. I wish I could have gone, it would have amused me to shoot at a French shoot, and seen how they did it, provided they didn't shoot me. . . . Leave has been cut down to two officers a month per regiment; I hope it is only for November, as otherwise I shall not be home for five more months. . . .

¶ Things were going badly on the Italian front and help had been urgently requested from the Franco-British armies to save Italy. Dick refers to this disaster in writing to Miss Tiddeman on 17th November:

. . . I am in a fairly comfortable billet, very bored and fed up with this exile and vile war; also with the Italians for running away. I do hope the Germans won't get Varenna; if the Italians lose the Stellis pass they will come down that way, but it is very narrow. . . .

¶ Fortunately the invasion of Italy was stopped by the Allies' aid; the squadrons of British R.F.C. especially checked the immediate advance. Dick's next letter to his mother is dated 25th November, from the neighbourhood of Amiens:

. . . We have moved several times since I last wrote, and are in quite comfortable billets within three miles of where I lived for over a year,* so the country is pretty familiar. The Cambrai battle has been very successful, due almost entirely to the Tanks and the fact that it was a complete surprise. The Regiment as a whole were very disappointed at not getting a fight; some of the Cavalry did very well. The prospects of leave are very bad, we have not got a single officer's vacancy for the whole of December, and have only had two during November, and there are still nine whose turn it is to go before me. There is a talk we shall only go twice a year for a fortnight, making one month's leave annually. The Italian news seems much better, and I do hope and think now Venice will be saved. I thought Sir Henry had gone to Italy, but now I see Plumer is gone, and Sir Henry has taken over Plumer's Army. . . . Claud must be very proud of the way his Tanks did, I have heard nothing of him for ages. . . .

* Château de Querrieu.

¶To H.D.A.: 7th December, 1917.

. . . I was so pleased to get your letter; I have been meaning to write, but it is so cold in my room . . . and the Regimental office is as bad, but there, one has to lump it. I have got an awfully nice room but we can get no fuel except damp wood, which won't burn. I had a line from Philip who said he was in hospital with a chill on the tummy, which I was very pleased to hear as his Division has been in this fighting. . . . Has Sir Arthur Lee given Chequers to the nation *now*? I can't make out from the papers. I thought it was to be after his death...

¶To his Mother: 12th December, 1917.

. . . I feel very ashamed of not having written to you for your birthday. I only remembered it on the actual day, and we were standing to in the Cambrai district at the time, expecting to go into the battle at any moment, but never did, and only had three days' discomfort and exposure. I heard from Philip again to-day; still in hospital I am glad to say. He tells me his section sergeant was killed and many of his men, so I am indeed thankful he was not there, as he would probably have been where his sergeant was. I am afraid the Germans will bring many divisions from Russia and attack us hard from here, as they know we have sent a large army to Italy. I don't think they will get on much more into Italy. You ask me if I would like books: well, I would like one or two very much. It is very dull back here with the horses now the Regiment has gone into the trenches, there is very little to do. Tell Pam I am within a ride of V.B. and shall go over and look at the pheasants before going on leave and see if they can be packed and carried. Delacour himself is at Peronne, but he might be able to come over to V.B. and meet me. I am afraid they may be rather bulky. There is a tremendous roar of artillery that has been going on for several hours, coming down the wind from the direction of Cambrai, it is 35 miles away, but at moments every window in this house rattles as if it were going to fall out. I am afraid the Germans must be making a big attack, but one hears practically nothing of what is going on. . . .

¶To his step-father, about 20th December:

. . . Just a line to wish you, Mum and Ruthie the best of luck for Xmas under the circumstances. I am in the line, not much of a place for Xmas, especially in this "seasonable weather," as Mrs. B. would call it. However, it is quiet, and we have a good battalion H.Q., but it is terribly cold for those in the front line. . . . We have only had one post for a week. I have no time or opportunity to write letters, so I hope dear Mother and Ruth will understand and will know that I am thinking of them and longing to be with them . . . I have a great deal of work dealing with all the Bromo (don't be rude!) showered on us by the higher formations, but thank God we have a hut and a stove. . . . 3rd January, 1918.

My dearest Mother.—Many thanks for your letter, which I got this morning. I have had several but I doubt if I had had all. Our post went to the devil for Xmas. I got back from the trenches yesterday and am about 15 miles from the

sea. Our billets are very good but most infernally cold—a French Château and, like all the rest, only intended for summer habitation, masses of windows and great open fireplaces, in which our scanty ration of fuel is almost useless. At the moment I was warmer and more comfortable in the trenches* as I had an awfully comfortable hut dug-out to sleep in and another as an office, both with excellent stoves and as much wood as I wanted, cut down by the Bosch, before his retreat last spring, out of spite. It was certainly unlucky for the owners but to us it was a godsend to have masses of firewood ready cut and no one to tell you not to take it. Regimental Headquarters were 1½ miles from the front line and as safe as a house and most comfortable, with a 30-feet dug-out to retire into in case of bombardment. I never saw a shell, however, within a mile. The front trenches were shelled a bit but we were very lucky and only had one man killed and one wounded the whole time. There is a foot of snow here and it is very difficult to get about. The General (of the Division) sent the Colonel and myself back in a car, but we had an awful journey; it took us six hours and then we ended up in a snowdrift four miles from our destination and had to spend the night in the nearest house, which was far more uncomfortable than we had been in the line. The Colonel was an ass not to stay in Amiens, as I suggested at 6 p.m. when we passed through it, and I took care to rub it in! The Regiment is still in the line but will probably come out about the 15th. They only have one Colonel and Adjutant in the line for three regiments, and the command has now been taken over by Lord Tweedmouth.† I believe Philip's lot were about the next regiment but two of us, but of course I had no chance of seeing him, as adjutant is supposed not to go out of reach of his telephone when in the line. Now I must thank you very much for the scarf and mittens. Two days before I had lost my scarf and was without one, so it was a perfect godsend. The wind was like ice and enough to blow your head off at night when I had to work up to the trenches. I cannot write any more as my hands are too cold. I think I have written most of the news; perhaps you will pass it on.... I hope to write to them all, but not, I fear, at such length as this....

Ever so much love, Dick.

In the spring of 1918 it was decided to dismount the three Household Cavalry Regiments, and form them into motor machine-gun battalions. This change was in progress when the German offensive was launched in March. When the attack began the Household Cavalry had handed over their horses, but had not yet commenced their machine-gun training. They were moved to the neighbourhood of Arras for a few days at the end of March, with a view to being employed in the line, but the tension relaxing, they were sent back to Etaples. Here the men were trained as machine-gunners, while the officers underwent a course of training at

* The Regiment had been in the trenches at de Vergués.
† Commanding the Blues.

G.H.Q. Small Arms School at Camiers. On the completion of the training the 1st Life Guards were attached to the 1st Army as Army troops, and moved to Haute Avesnes.

¶To his Mother:

26th January, 1918.

. . . I am afraid it is some time since I wrote. . . . I think I shall probably get leave early in March, and about time too, I say; it will be six months since I was home. I wonder when Pippin will get his. . . . Somers has gone off to the Tanks! Has become a major with three captains and 20 subalterns under him. I miss him very much, and rather wish I had gone too. There is no promotion at all in the cavalry; but perhaps it is better so than promotion to the other world, which is the reason for it in the other arms. I suppose Philip is in the trenches; I hear they are likely to be there for several more weeks. I had heard about the breaking up of the H.B. . . . We have just got the ribbon of our 1914 star. It is red, white and blue, very ugly, I think, but still we are very pleased to have it, and I do think the first seven Divisions earned a medal if ever anyone did, but I think it is a pity all the hangers-on at the base and Army Service Corps get it, and I think the men feel rather indignant about it. I enclose you a photo of the banner (which possibly you may have helped to pay for and already seen) presented by the relatives of those who first came out, for the commemoration of the Regiments of the first seven Divisions in the memorial service held the other day. . . .

15th February, 1918.

. . . I hope to get leave at the end of next week, with luck. Hurrah! Fancy your going off to Immingham! It is a fine effort, I do hope you will keep back Ruth to see me. . . .

¶Dick arrived in England on a fortnight's leave on the 21st February, missing Philip, who had been at home for the previous fortnight, by a few hours, but his sister's return to school had been delayed as he wished, so that they might meet, and Dick took her to her first party in London during this visit, most of which was spent, as usual, at Benham. Mr. Cecil Sutton's son was born on 24th February, at Holdcroft. The entail of the Sutton estates having now ended, Dick made this baby cousin his heir, so that if his own life were lost in the war, the property should continue to be held, undivided, in the line of direct descent.

¶At this time the stress of public service was so great that further appeal was made to women of the upper classes to take part in it, and Dick's mother offered to work unpaid in the Coding Office at Immingham, on the Humber, which was, during the war, Headquarters of the East Coast Command. The Vice-Admiral then in command (Vice-Admiral Stuart Nicholson, C.B.), gratefully

accepted her offer, subject to Admiralty consent, but the matter was referred to the Director of the newly-formed W.R.N.S., who declined unpaid service. As the rules of the W.R.N.S. required an unconditional promise of service for the duration of the war, regardless of family claims, it was impossible for Lady Sutton to undertake duty with the Corps, and her services, with those of other volunteers, were lost to the country. The matter was under discussion during Dick's leave, and he, while sympathising in her desire for a more active share in war work, was frankly relieved to hear, a few weeks later, that his mother was prevented from taking it, under the somewhat Spartan conditions inevitable in a temporary base on the East Coast, exposed to North Sea weather and Zeppelin raids. Lady Sutton was much disappointed.

To his Mother:

13th March, 1918.

. . . I got back quite safely and am at present very busy. I really think I shall like the change very much, anyhow for a time. We shall be near the sea for about three months' training, I expect, and I shall very likely come home for a month's course at Grantham (Lincolnshire), so I might be able to get over and see you occasionally.* We had left T.† when I got back, so I had no opportunity of seeing either Pippin or Giuseppe. We have had the most lovely weather for our marches, two of which I have missed. I think I shall be able to send Cooncan back to barracks and keep the pony with me. We have got very good billets and expect to be here about a week . . . .

28th March, 1918.

. . . I am afraid it is some time since I wrote last. We have been kept busy from morning till night with orders and counter orders all resulting in very little. This terrible German attack found us in the transition stage and neither fish, flesh, nor fowl, and we have so far seen nothing of the battle. I trust Pippin is all right. I hear the Cavalry have done very well. It is awfully difficult for us to get any news where we are and I think you probably have news quicker in England. Lorry drivers and the like passing by tell us awful rumours; the lower classes love looking on the gloomy side of things and exaggerate it so much. However, I do hope now the worst is over, the Germans cannot go on attacking in these numbers, one feels; their losses must have been enormous, and most of the ground they have taken was a desert since the Somme battle. Amiens is, of course, their objective. Of course the future is obscure for the moment and will be until this battle finishes. Anyhow, I don't feel hopeful of coming home to do a course at Grantham. We have had no frost for several days. We have had very comfortable billets, but are now in great squalor; I have not got a bed, and the village is full of refugees. . . .

* At Immingham.
† Trefcon.

¶Meanwhile Philip, who was with his regiment in the 5th Army Area, near Noyon, was involved in the general retreat of 21st March. He was only twenty-one, but had already seen two and a half years' service, and distinguished himself now by his coolness and power of leadership. He was awarded the Military Cross; the announcement in the Gazette being as follows:

"Lt. P. R. Astley, Lancers, attached Machine Gun Corps. When in command of a mixed force of dismounted cavalry and four machine-guns he protected the right flank of the Brigade. Under heavy shell fire he organised this party with great skill and, when ordered to retire, he withdrew through heavy machine-gun fire to a second position, where he again organised defence. By his energy and splendid example the flank of the Brigade was protected through a very critical period."

¶Few things gave Dick so much pleasure as his brother's distinction (see letter of 1st May).

¶To his Mother:

6th April, 1918.

. . . Several letters have just arrived from you in a bundle, for which many thanks. Mails have been bad since the battle. We went up to it on our flat feet, or rather near it, but were not used and have now come back to camp by the sea to commence our new training. Camp in this weather is not joy, but we are very lucky to have even tents. Pippin told me his equitation course did not start till the 27th, so fear the battle caught him before he went; however, I do trust he is all right. We shall be here for two months, unless it is a case of requiring us for a forlorn hope, which I hope is not likely. I am not very happy about the situation. The men and officers of the British army are not what they were, and the Germans know it. They would not have had this success in 1916 even if they could have employed as many men and guns. This rain in camp is vile. . . .

¶To his Mother:

13th April, 1918.

. . . I cannot help being rather pleased you are not going to Immingham. I think the authorities are jolly good fools to have missed getting you, and that's a fact. I am so delighted to hear Pippin is all right so far. I hear on all sides the Cavalry did splendidly. This new battle at Armentières now seems to be very critical. Will Italy be the next? We have got a good old froust up in the Common room. I am thankful I am not in camp; it is blowing a hurricane and a cold one at that. . . .

¶To H.D.A.:

G.H.Q. Small Arms School, 15th April, 1918.

. . . Poor Delacour, I had a letter from him saying he had lost everything at Villers Brettoneux. Not a bird saved, and the place a pile of brick-dust by now, as the battle line is only 1,000 yards in front of it. His mother only just got

away in time in a farm cart. It is just like being back at Ludgrove, only less pleasant, being here. We start work at 8.30 and continue till 5.15, with one hour off for lunch. At 1 o'clock the bell rings, and we all dash into the school dining room, where we are waited on by W.A.A.C.'s who rival the "boys' maids" of the past for ugliness. We generally attend lectures in the morning and terrify the French fishermen and civilians in the afternoons with showers of bullets either into the sea or among the sand dunes. To-day being Sunday, we have got a day off, but the wind and the weather are so vile I won't leave the house, which is very tolerably comfortable. All captains and majors have a room to themselves, and we have a very comfortable common room with plenty of armchairs and two large stoves. Will you please thank Ruthie very much for her splendid long letter, and tell her I will write to her next Sunday, which, as at Ludgrove, is our best letter-writing day? . . .

¶ To his Sister:

Sunday, 22nd April, 1918.

My dear Ruthie.—What a splendid long letter you wrote me. I was so pleased to get it. It must have been sad for you leaving all your friends at school, but it was nice having such a splendid send-off. You have left school; I have gone back to it, as you have no doubt heard, only the hours are longer than I have ever been used to before. We start at 8.30 and go on without a break till 1 o'clock, then one hour for lunch, start again at 2.0 and continue, again without a break, till 5.30, by which time I hardly know if I am on my head or my heels. Then after dinner we are supposed to do preparation. No half-holidays, but to-day is Sunday, which is very pleasant. I am going to ride over to Le Touquet and play golf in about half-an-hour's time. I may add the food here is more vile than in any school, cooked by W.A.A.C.'s, who I am sure have never cooked anything in their lives before and are learning at our expense. I wish you were cook here. I hear you are very good. There was a W.A.A.C. dance last night which I did not attend, but I hear they had the Machine Gun Corps string band, which is very good; it came to play to us one night at dinner. As I have told you above how we spend each day, you can imagine there is not very much news to tell you. The General Staff G.H.Q. telegraph us the battle situation twice a day, so we hear how things are, which is something. Some asses bathe in the sea in this vile weather. One has now taken to his bed. I suppose if you were here you would try to commit this folly? . . .

Your ever loving brother, Dick.

¶ To his Mother:

G.H.Q. Small Arms School, 1st May, 1918.

. . . Thank you so much for your dear birthday letters, which I was so pleased to get. I am quite delighted to hear Pippin has the M.C. I had a letter from him a few days ago. I hear on first-hand authority that he did most awfully well, and that it was no surprise to other people that he got the M.C. although he writes it was a surprise to himself. I went to stay with Rawly for Sunday, he was in very good form and quite confident. His army, as you have no doubt seen in the papers, is in front of Amiens. The Australians killed a lot of Bosches

in the recent fighting at Villers Brettoneux. Poor Delacour's aviaries are a shambles, and all the birds must have died. The château will be no loss to posterity. I am writing this in the luncheon interval, as being away I could not write letters on Sunday. Our course is being lengthened a fortnight which is very satisfactory and will add very much to our efficiency. The Bosche is expected to launch another huge attack on a 50 mile front like his first one, and on this will no doubt turn the decision of the two battles. I trust he will be less successful than on 21st March. The weather is odious for our outdoor work, and to-night we are doing night firing.

Sunday, 5th May, 1918.

. . . Our course has been extended to the 20th, after which we shall probably do some training with our own men. Of course if the Bosches broke through again in their next attack some of us would probably go up to stop the gap. I think we know quite enough about the gun to kill lots of Bosches with it. It is quite splendid about Pippin. . . . I am writing this from Le Touquet. I have come over here for the day to lunch and dinner with Lord Lovat, who is Director of Forestry. Le Touquet is a very nice place and the golf links are good. We played golf this afternoon and got soaked by a very heavy shower of rain, and I am now wearing borrowed clothes. The course is getting much more amusing and less technical. We do more than half our work out of doors. As soon as there seems any chance of getting it I am going to put in for leave to Varenna on "urgent private affairs." . . . I have been a fool not to have done so before. Now I fear the journey is more tiresome. . . .

23rd May.

. . . I was too busy to write this last Sunday, but I shall try to keep to the school habit of writing on Sundays. . . . We expect to move but have not done so yet. We had very bad luck with a German bombing raid a few days ago; it is more than sickening, right back here, to lose good fellows without firing a shot. Just sheer bad luck. The German bombing aeroplanes have been very active lately. . . . We got eight trout on the fishing trip, but the weather was against us. The heat has been terrific and I have been almost melted. I hope to get off to Varenna in about a fortnight or three weeks' time. . . . England in general, and Brinsop in particular, must be looking lovely now. Leave is still closed pending the next Bosche offensive. I wish they would buck up and make it. I shall be anxious to hear what Pam thinks of the oak in my sitting room at 41. I hope the Bosche has not dropped a bomb on it. . . .

¶ Written from Haute-Avesnes:

Sunday, 2nd June, 1918.

. . . Here goes for the Sunday letter. How much longer this good habit will last, I don't know, of course if we were in the line it would be difficult to know which is Sunday. We are very comfortable, quite extraordinarily so, considering how near we are to the line. It is really very quiet here, only an odd shell or two occasionally; I don't know how long it may last. This southern battle seems a bad business. Ludendorff certainly plays his cards well. I fear there is no hope of Varenna at present. Leave is cut down to a minimum, and all leave is cut out of the regular allotment, so one does not like to ask. I do hope as more Americans

arrive we may get more leave. This war is the sheer limit. I do trust the Bosche won't overrun Northern Italy and take Varenna. . . . I am very sorry the oak was not up for Pam to see, they told me it would be ready, and I should have so liked to hear his opinion on it. There is a dry fly river near here, but it is rather close the line to be fully enjoyed; our doctor, who is madly keen, goes down every day in spite of the Bosche putting a couple of shells into the river itself. It is not half such a good stream as the one near Etaples, and is full of Tommies bathing, which does not add to the chances of catching a fish. I suppose Pippin is still at the Cavalry Corps school, I hope he will stay there. I was counting on getting to Varenna, so am rather depressed that it is fading away again. . . . this stupid new rule spoils everything. I am afraid this is a dull letter, I am feeling depressed over this Aisne defeat and the leave shortage. . . .

9th June, 1918.

. . . Sunday round again still finds us in the same place in comfort. I had hoped to go off on a fishing expedition, but my manoeuvres to get a car have, alas, so far failed. I am afraid it will be the last chance of Mayfly, and it is 40 miles to the really good river. It is in the Dieppe direction, and I hear is as good as the Kennet or Test, so I am awfully keen to go. I wonder if the Bosche will attack the British again or continue to devote all his attention to Paris and the French. I am afraid I am boiled for Varenna at present, as they have opened ordinary leave in a minute quantity and closed special leave. Special leave now has to come out of the ordinary allotment, and so, by going on it, one would take a vacancy from a private who has been out here 15 months without leave, or an officer who has been out here eight, which would not be fair unless one's U.P.A. were really frightfully urgent. So there it is. I hope as more Yanks arrive they may open up our leave more. We sadly need a shower of rain, the dust is awful, but I never go outside the area of our billets if I can help it, and as most of my work is office work or drill I don't have to. I take no exercise, so have given up having anything to eat at either breakfast or tea and feel so much better for it, and think, anyhow in the summer time, I shall never take to it again. Would you give Pam the enclosed photograph of Delacour, it might amuse him to see it.*. . . Sometime, perhaps, he would slip it into my writing-table drawer at 41. We have got a nice band out here now, which is very pleasant. Mr. Miller had to disgorge some of his retainers. The brass band is 16 and there is a very good string band of four. Colonel Brassey has a very nice little folding piano which is just right for the string band. I must go and dress for dinner, as I see it is 7.50. . . .

18th June, 1918.

. . . I got away fishing last week-end after all, and was able to stay away Monday as well as I did not get off till Sunday morning. I went to the most ripping dry-fly river not far from Dieppe, full of trout rising to the Mayfly, but I simply could not catch one, wasn't it sickening? I had not got the right sort of flies for the river, I am afraid. We are still in the same place, and have been attacked by an epidemic of influenza instead of by the Bosche, which has already

* Mr. Astley had supposed his correspondent on Aviculture to be an elderly savant whereas he was in reality quite young.

carried off 75 victims from us but so far not me. It is supposed to be rampant in the Bosche army as well; I hope it may be so. Can you send me some books please, about one a week; if by chance you go to London would you choose some and order Bumpus to send them out weekly? I also want two lunch cases which I know are things you like choosing; however, if you are not going to London I must write and ask Irene or someone in Barracks to do it. Both these two things, however, appear to be eminently in your line. . . . The books I should like to be good histories—fairly light—of China, Russia, Japan and France. An occasional exciting or amusing novel without any mention of the war in it. I am awfully glad Ruthie enjoyed her outing and was a success, both of which I expected. . . . Owsley has written to ask me to be godfather to his son, and I have accepted. . . . I have now got four if not more godchildren, and have given nothing to any of them so far. . . . If only we were billeted near a good trout stream it would make the whole difference. This is a very boring place, one cannot go out riding because of the crops, and the roads are so dusty I won't go near them unless I have to. We played a cricket match against the local hospital staff on Saturday and got badly beaten. On Tuesday we have got a football match against the 3rd Coldstream. We have got rather a hot side at football, which is played all the year round regardless of the heat. It is pouring with rain at last; I am rather glad as I have got a good roof over my head, it will lay the dust. You will have seen in the casualty list that Somers is wounded, it is only very slight, I am glad to say. He had an exciting time with his tanks; he commands 25. It is terribly sad that George Boscawen is missing. I am afraid there is little hope. He got his D.S.O. in 1914 for firing his guns himself after all his men had been killed, until the Bosches were 20 yards away. One cannot do this twice and survive, and I feel sure he did it again. . . . I cared more for Bunny and Tommy than for George, but he was a very fine, brave, straight, pure-minded man, as one would expect of a Boscawen. Tommy, by the way, who joined the Rifle Brigade as 2nd Lt. in July, 1914, having survived being in the front line of every battle that has taken place on the Western front, is now a Colonel commanding his battalion. . . . I am very glad you are making Unks take a little rest. Next time I come on leave I hope I may get a month. . . . I shall lock up Unk's office and keep the key. Don't warn him of this or he will take counter preparations. I don't see any hope of leave till September. . . .

3rd July, 1918.

. . . Thank you so much for sending the books, which have arrived. Our motor transport has arrived which is most exciting; we did not expect to get it till August. Now we are so mobile I hope we may go off into the back areas and be nearer the trout streams. I have got the use of a very nice 20 h.p. Sunbeam car, and keep one horse as well, so have never been so well off during the whole course of the war. I think the prospects of my Varenna leave are brightening a bit. They grant eight days' foreign leave, besides the very limited allowance of English leave, but I want 20 days at least, and the point is will they grant me that without counting it against my English leave. With the present state of travelling it isn't worth going beyond Paris with only eight days. . . .

Passport getting is a slow and tiresome job too, but I have a friend in the British Embassy in Paris who will help me greatly. How we long for rain to lay this cursed dust. I suppose you saw Sir Arthur Lee has been made a peer. One cannot help feeling his giving Chequers for the P.M.'s had more to do with it than his work at the Food Board, else why not have left it in his will? Will he call himself Lord Chequers of Kimble? I suppose that would be disputed by the "Duchess of Kimble, whose feet you could put in a thimble," etc. (Shakespeare, isn't it, that verse, or is it Astley? Anyhow no matter, both equally high-class poetry). No signs of the Bosches' next attack yet, except in those wiseacres in military matters, the ½d. Press. No doubt he will have another big show as soon as he can. I think the Bosche Army has got the flue very badly, which is to be hoped for. Has the epidemic got to Herefordshire yet? . . .

19th July, 1918.

. . . Our Squax has arrived in a village about seven miles from here, isn't it splendid? I heard his Division were coming and I discovered him yesterday. He is in very good form, looked very well and seemed thoroughly happy as usual. He said he enjoyed his time at the Cavalry Corps School very much. I am going over to-morrow afternoon, and am going to bring him back to dine and sleep here. I have put in my application for leave to Varenna again on the plea of urgent private affairs, and am quite hopeful of getting it. I have asked for three weeks. Pippin has also applied to go there for ten days in lieu of the ordinary Paris leave for which he is due. If he gets it it will be splendid. . . . I have no news of any interest beyond the excitement of Pippin's arrival in the neighbourhood. . . .

Dick obtained his leave. He writes to his step-father on 2nd August:

. . . My leave to Italy is sanctioned by G.H.Q, and I hope to start next week. How I wish you were all three coming too. I hope to be away for three weeks. . . There are a splendid lot of Yank troops about everywhere, and they look first-rate fighting men. . . .

About a week later he writes again to Mr. Astley:

. . . I arrived here on Saturday, and it is like being translated from hell to heaven. I feel the first letter I write from here must be to you. How much I wish you were here too and Mother and Ruthie. It all looks quite charming and the house and garden so well kept. After five years it all looks just as if we had all been here until a few days ago. The oleanders . . . I have never seen anything so lovely in my life. To my mind they beautify the garden even more than the wisteria. Of course I have never before been out here before the end of August, so have never seen them at their best till now. The lower terrace has grown up enormously and is quite charming. The chestnut doors and squared windows I had put into all the bedrooms in 1913 are a great improvement. I missed Charlie Mylius by two hours, wasn't it bad luck? He left at 9 a.m. and I arrived at 11. Found that old pet Michele on the platform to meet

me; he had met every train and steamer for eight days. Annie* is staying here but, alas, goes to-morrow to Genoa to work in a canteen. Poor dear, life must be sad for her and she is so unselfish. Dear old Michele is very well; he has aged a good deal, his moustache is quite white and he is rather bald. Celestina and Maria are just the same. Celestina much thinner, and, I think, looks younger in consequence. "Por little Dahki" is much aged and has a very bad coat, but is very affectionate. I am glad to say I am not alone as I feared I should be, as I met Alistair Leveson Gower and his bride in Paris on their way to Biarritz for their honeymoon leave and I brought them here instead. We had a job to get passports in time but I went to Lord Derby about it and he managed it. I had to be in Paris three days before I got my place in the train. A shell from "Big Bertha" fell within 150 yards of me just off the Rue de la Paix!! an unexpected pleasure when on leave. I seem to have gone on leave just the right time to miss a battle! It was really kept a surprise this time, hence the success, and a jolly good smack for the Boche. Oh *how* I wish you were here, you old dear. Mother's Paradiso is looking charming, and I feel the very walls are asking me when she is coming. I will write again soon. Must go and bathe now. There is no hot water, but what matter, we bathe twice a day off the steps. . . .

The next letter from Italy is to his sister:

Villa dei Cipressi, Varenna, 21st August, 1918.

My dearest Ruthie.—It is ages since I wrote to you. . . . How I wish you were here. I bathe in the lake three times a day, and the temperature of the water is well over 70°. . . . I walked up to the Bargesa two days ago, it has grown up quite wonderfully. The Wyatts' house looks much nicer than it did. The golf course looked as pretty as ever, but as it was covered with hay we could not play. A marble tombstone has been erected over the last resting-place of "Ma Chinnie," about 50 yards from the front door. This will amuse Father and Mother. Both the hotels here are hospitals for Italian wounded. We rowed across to Bellaggio in the "Donna Maria" a few days ago. It was like a place of the dead without the usual crowd of Germans, and much nicer in consequence. The "Donna Maria" has been requisitioned by the military authorities, for the Piave, I suppose, but has luckily not had to go yet. Monte Crocione has three roads up it now, but unluckily one is not allowed to go up it at present as it is "Zona militare." Celestina is much thinner, due to rations and manual labour in the Vignetta, but looks just the same otherwise. Poor little "Dahki" looks very well. She has made the greatest friends with a cat, and they always go about together, sleep in the same box, etc. Dahki attends all meals punctually and regularly, but at other times disappears into the Casa Vecchia. Please tell Father that the mimosa he planted on the circular piece of the lower terrace is now quite 15 feet high. It is never in the least too hot as there is a lovely breeze every afternoon, but one does not feel inclined to do anything violent between lunch and tea. Please give very much love to all. Your loving brother, Dick.

*Mrs. Charles Mylius.

¶To his Mother, on his return to France:

28th August, 1918.

. . . I thought of you so much at Varenna. Your Paradiso was looking as if you had never left it. It was occupied by the honeymoon couple. I have just got back here, and find I have missed some battling, in which, I am sorry to say, one of our corporal-majors had both his legs blown off. Thompson* will be sorry as he used to be one of his corporals of horse in old days, Brown by name. I had quite a comfortable journey back as I had a 2-berth wagon-lit to myself on a crowded train. The other berth was taken by a naval captain from Malta who was so much annoyed at the present price of sleepers, that he refused to pay and walked off to another part of the train in a rage. As the train had started of course no one thought of asking if there was an empty sleeper, it having been posted up at Turin that the train was full, wasn't it luck? . . . . To my great surprise when I got back I found that, after none at all, a perfect flood of leave vacancies had been thrown at us, and I am down to go to England on 4th September. This is very inconvenient as it is a bore to have five weeks' leave all together, and then none for six months. It makes such a bad division. . . . secondly, you have guests at Brinsop . . . . thirdly, Philip may get his leave later on. I shall therefore give up my turn in exchange for a vacancy at the end of the month. Everyone in the Regiment is very bucked up with their fight, as we had very few casualties, no officers at all. The Bosches seem to be very rattled and disorganised. . . .

6th September.

. . . By the time this arrives I expect Pippin will have arrived at Brinsop. I have seen him several times as he has been only 15 miles away. . . . It is rather bad luck he could not postpone his leave, so we could have overlapped, but anyhow it is on the whole nicer for you than to have us both together, as leave is so short. I do hope he succeeds in getting an extension, he was full of hope, but then he always is. Not much news—we went up to battle one day since my return but were not used. The Bosche army is very, very tired; my only fear is we have not got sufficient strength to knock him out, and the Yanks are still very raw and strange to the business. The weather, too, may not hold. . . . Tell Thompson that Corporal-major Brown is still alive. I am sorry to say John Astor has lost a leg below the knee and had his left arm broken. . . . He was so good at tennis and racquets, so it makes it worse luck. Just a chance shell at long range. The two books, "The Mikado's Empire" and a novel, have arrived, and I am reading the former, which is interesting. . . . We play bridge most evenings; I cannot hold a single card, but as we only play one franc a hundred I am not quite broke yet. I shall try and work an extension to my leave, I think it is only fair as I always have to waste a couple of days doing business. . . .

21st September, 1918.

. . . My leave is now a little uncertain I am sorry to say; we had a vacancy on the 23rd and another on 25th. I was to go on the 23rd, and another officer on

* Thompson, formerly a Corporal-major in the 1st Life Guards, was employed at Brinsop Court when his term of service ended in 1913, rejoined the regiment during the war for duty in training recruits, and returned later to Mr. Astley's service.

the 25th who was going to be married on the 28th; everything was arranged for his wedding, invitations sent out, etc. Now we are suddenly told we can only send one more officer this month. It is really my turn first for English leave, but it seems rather selfish to cart the whole of his arrangements, so I have decided to stand down and not enforce my rights. It is just possible, however, he may be able to get his special leave under the circumstances, but I am not counting on it. It is lucky Pippin got leave when he did as .... has now stopped it. It will amuse Philip to hear he (———) made a real hash of a recent field day, and got a good tight one from the highest authority. By the way, I suppose Philip may have gone back by the time this reaches you.... Two books just arrived, many thanks. I am now well in hand as I have much less time for reading....

¶The last phase of the war had now set in with the destruction of the last German line. By the end of September the German High Command had notified their Government that an armistice must be requested, while the Allies, pressing on beyond the devastated zone, made increasingly rapid progress during the following month. The 1st Life Guards Machine Gun Battalion was moved constantly in support of the advancing troops, but was not again brought into action. The enemy made a final stand against the British Army in the wooded country between Valenciennes and Landrecies, and against the French and Americans south of the Meuse, but only postponed their complete defeat by a week or two.

¶Meanwhile leave was being regularly granted in the British Army and Dick's turn for it came again on 9th October. His brother was already in England, having been sent over for a Machine-gun course at Grantham, and was now on leave, and the whole family party collected once more at Benham. Dick was in great spirits, with the end of the war, victory, and peace within sight; it seemed only a short time now before he would be at home for good, and the next three weeks were a time of pure enjoyment.

¶As usual, there were relays of visitors, and on most days Dick would take some of them out shooting, the others joining them for a picnic luncheon. Many of his old friends, and some of his brother officers were there some time between the 9th and 29th of October, and one of them, who had to borrow a gun, found afterwards that Dick had lent him his own newest and best. "It was so like Dick," said his guest, "to lend his best gun, and use a less good one himself."

¶He left again for France on 29th October, and found the regiment had moved to Ostricourt, near Lille. Events moved quickly. The triumphal entry of the Allies into Lille had already taken place, the rejoicing of the inhabitants, and of the digging up of treasures that they had hastily buried four years before.

¶The next letter to his mother was written from Ostricourt on the eve of the Armistice:

10th November, 1918.

. . . I am sorry I have not written sooner since I got back, as it is now more than a week, I am afraid. We moved to-day into some quite comfortable billets near a large town* lately evacuated by the Bosche, not the one we all want to go to and about which we had such a joke. The inhabitants of this village are very pleased to see us and do all they can to make us comfortable, but it is impossible to buy eggs or any form of food for the mess. It is very nice having a sound roof and a bed, as since I have got back I have been living in a hut full of holes, which was most unpleasant as it has rained for three days without stopping. It is awfully exciting about the delegates coming to Foch, but I fear they will not sign our armistice terms just yet. It would be almost too good to be true if they did. I have started another vile cold in my head, such a bore as it makes one feel such a worm, and is not bad enough to go sick or get any sympathy. We have had no letters for several days owing to moving about, but we hope to get a good fat mail to-morrow. Excuse this dull letter. . . .

¶To H.D.A.:

12th November, 1918.

. . . I can still hardly realise the armistice has been signed; it seems too good to be true. I went into Lille for lunch on the great day. This revolution in Germany is most annoying; it was quite unnecessary from our point of view as the German Army is thoroughly beaten and in full flight; much of it, I should think, will never stop running. The inhabitants here are wild with excitement and are busy digging up their money, plate and other valuables which they had buried over four years ago. The houses on the whole are in very good condition, and we are really very comfortable, but of course have to live on nothing but rations, as one cannot buy anything, there being no food to buy. The Germans have done a good deal of looting. We are very hopeful that this Regiment may return very soon to England and not have to go to the Rhine as an army of occupation. It is truly wonderful that both Philip and I should be alive to see peace without even losing a limb. This regiment has been very lucky since I came back to it. The only battle it took part in I happened to be on leave at Varenna. We have been able to obtain very little to drink, so I was unable to get tight when the armistice was signed! . . .

¶To his Sister:

21st November, 1918.

My dearest Ruthie.—. . . Now the war is over time out here drags in the most appalling way; it seems weeks instead of days since the Armistice was signed.

*Lille.

We are sitting in a rather dirty Flanders village in a perfectly flat country with nothing to do from morning till night. The relaxation of the tension is so extraordinary. Of course for the troops *en route* for Germany there is plenty of interest, but on the whole I am glad we did not go, as I think there is a better chance of our getting home sooner if we don't. I do hope they will start demobilisation soon as there is no need to keep the English, French and American armies at full strength with the Bosche in his present state. I do wonder what Philip will do now; I should have thought they might have given them all a month's leave at Grantham, anyhow I don't suppose he will over-exert himself now with machine-gunnery... Paper chases and football are the only form of either exercise or recreation in this place, and I am too fat and old to enjoy either of these. One cannot buy any food, so have to live entirely on Government rations and what parcels we get. Eggs I have not seen for weeks. Rumour has it we shall move towards the Base soon; if so, I hope it is Rouen, and not Boulogne or Havre area. No one can take any interest in soldiering whatever now, and this makes one very bored. Please tell Mother I have enough books for another ten days at least. Please also say the socks have arrived safely and are a great success, but I will write and thank her myself to-morrow. One has loads of time for letter-writing but unluckily not loads to say. Very best love to Pam, Mother and yourself. Your ever loving brother, Dick.

¶The cold to which Dick alludes in these last letters was really influenza, which had swept over Europe in recurring epidemics through the last two years of war, and now spread in a peculiarly virulent form of septic pneumonia. It was not until 20th November that the regimental doctor noticed that Dick looked ill and took his temperature, found it to be over 103° and ordered him to bed. On the 23rd November, as he was no better, Dick was sent, with two other members of the mess, suffering from influenza, to hospital, and from there on the 25th to the Base Hospital at Wimereux. The dangerous nature of his illness was recognised, and the necessary permission to enter the war zone was telegraphed to his mother. This reached her on 27th November, and she and her husband were at Wimereux by mid-day on the 28th. Dick was still able to recognise them, and his last consciousness was in the happy smile that always greeted his mother's presence during that day and the next. His brother arrived on the evening of the 29th, but by then the last sleep had begun, in which, during the night of the 29th, Dick passed from this world. On 1st December, a day of frost and bright sunshine, his body was laid, with the touching ceremony of a soldier's burial, in the British Military Cemetery at Terlincthun, a mile from Wimereux.

A STEP-FATHER'S TRIBUTE.

SEE Dick, when I came into his life in the place of his father, whom he had never known, as a sturdy boy of four, very determined, very conservative in his affections, almost loath at first to recognise me as one closely bound to him, and certainly disinclined to admit any authority over him on my part. But after a while he began to feel my strong affection for him, responding whole-heartedly, until as the years went by we became more like brothers and close friends than step-father and son, so that one could come to him in all troubles and in all difficulties, which are the lot of even the happiest, feeling his great power of sympathy and understanding and common-sense. Never did anyone combine more than he, and that at an early age, the wisdom of the just along with the child-like spirit of the pure in heart. To dwell upon his strong sense of duty to, and thoughtfulness for others, would be but to recapitulate what has already been written, but how constantly was it there. After he came into his own, rushing down to Benham for perhaps a week-end from military duties, he would gaily talk, his conversation interrupted by infectious laughter, which bubbled forth, then walk from the room or garden before one could barely answer, betaking himself to his writing-table, because he must respond to letters from friends, letters of charity, and letters of business. And these in their turn were treated in the same manner, in order that he might take up the conversation and laughter, if only for a few minutes with those he delighted to company with.

¶ It was like the pendulum of a clock—first to one side, then to the other—the wisdom of the just, the play of the child spirit. And when one went to bid him good-night, not infrequently he would be on his knees by his bedside engaged in his evening prayers, and one silently sat down, waiting till he had finished, for he would never move or show a sign of one's presence until then, and this after he had attained to manhood, as well as all through his boyhood.

¶ Never, too, was anyone more free from false pride and the spirit of snobbery and self-importance. I recall how, after he was wounded in the war for the second time, he was able to pass happy summer

days at Benham, dressed as a rule in an old suit of grey Eton flannels, and looking, at the most, eighteen, and how a troop of cavalry *en route* for the front was quartered in one of his meadows. Dick, his mother, and I walked down to see the officers, and he, entering into conversation upon the war with a captain who had not yet seen active service, but was about to do so, made some remarks disparaging to the tactics of a certain English General in high authority, whereupon the cavalry captain answered ironically: "May I ask what *you* know about it?" Dick only smiled, saying: "Oh, I don't know—I think I understand a little," and proceeded to invite him and his brother officers to dinner. But in his answer there was no intrigue, and no desire to conceal facts in order to dismay later on; merely an intense dislike of boastfulness and display, an effacement of self. And I, feeling that the truth had better be told, since these officers were shortly to sit at his table, took the opportunity, out of Dick's hearing, to enlighten them. I fear I felt decidedly entertained at the expression on the face of the captain when I informed him that his host held the same rank as himself, and had been out in France since nearly the beginning of the war, and twice wounded!

¶But this is a good instance of Dick's "poorness of spirit," as described in the Sermon on the Mount. Of any assistance he gave to relations and friends and poorer brothers, he never spoke, although such assistance was in some cases regular and very generous, coming entirely off his own bat. He had the perception and wisdom of a man of mature age combined with the joyousness and simplicity of a child. A most faithful friend who never failed.

HUBERT D. ASTLEY.

¶The letters of sympathy written to Dick's mother and other members of the family contain so much that shows the light in which Dick appeared to many of widely different character and social place that some may be recorded for the sake of a generation to come, even more than for those who knew him in their own day, and knowing, could never forget or cease to love him.

¶From Sir Philip Sassoon, Bart., D.S.O., Military Secretary to Sir Douglas Haig:

General Headquarters, British Armies in France, 30th Nov., 1918.

Dear Lady Sutton.—Words are but clumsy instruments and I hesitate to bother you in this unbearable hour with the reading of a letter—for when I

realise what I feel about Dick's death, I get some faint conception of what you and Mr. Astley must be passing through. After leaving you yesterday afternoon I glanced once more at him through the door, and somehow I went out of the Hospital with all hope dead in my heart.

For those who were privileged to know him he will ever be a radiant memory. With all the manly qualities of high courage and modesty, he stood as well for all that is human and lovable, all those attributes of charm and vitality, of delicious humour and eager affection.

The certain promise of a glittering, useful and triumphant life lay before him, and he is gone. He is gone at the dawn of a day that he had longed passionately to see. Perhaps somewhere else it is dawning brightly for him, but for us who love and mourn him the brightness is for ever dimmed.

¶From Colonel E. Brassey, then commanding 1st Life Guards—at this time 1st Battalion Guards Machine Gun Regiment:

. . . No one better realised his position than Dick, or was more determined to do his utmost to make life a success. As a brother officer I can only say that no more generally beloved officer has ever served in this regiment. His name will be for ever treasured by every member of the Regiment. His every thought was for them and he was for ever mindful of the traditions and welfare of the 1st Life Guards.

I am holding a Memorial Service for him in this village to-morrow, which we shall all attend, and in expressing the most sincere sympathy with you on behalf of every man in the 1st Life Guards, I will only say that the memory of Dick will for ever be preserved in this Regiment as one who loved the 1st Life Guards, and who was loved by his comrades.

¶From Lord Titchfield, Captain R.H.G.:

My dear Lady Sutton.—. . . No words of mine will be able to express my deep sympathy in your great sorrow, but it must be a consolation to you (if any consolation is possible) to know what we, who were privileged to be his friends, thought of him. Dick I always thought was the most delightful man I ever met, absolutely unspoilt, of great sense and broad mind, and gifted with a delightful sense of humour which made him the most pleasant of companions. There are not many Dicks about now, and when one dies, his death becomes a matter of absolute national importance, because I am sure it is the Dicks of this country who are going to see us through the difficult time ahead. . . .

¶From Lord Somers, 1st Life Guards:

. . . How futile letters are; they can't convey anything but they can form a little chain, each link of which is sympathy. May this one be a link as it takes with it a real, deep sympathy with you. You can guess how I felt about Dick. We were really intimate and discussed all our schemes together—plans for the future, big and little—a few for ourselves, but most for less fortunate fellow-citizens, especially those who had fought our battles in France and elsewhere. Dick had some wonderful thoughts and a life's work was being evolved. The pity of it! . . .

¶From Lord Althorp, Captain, 1st Life Guards:

. . . It is quite impossible to realise that that wonderful personality, so full of vitality, has left this world for ever. But if it has pleased God to take him to a better world, he has left behind a wonderful example for us who remain to follow in: of being absolutely unspoilt, of high-mindedness and purity, of great loyalty to his friends, and of doing a tremendous amount of good without publishing it—in fact, he was everything a Christian and a gentleman should be. . . . I hesitate to say anything personally except that I have lost my best friend, and that I shall always look back on our friendship with feelings of the greatest gratitude and thanks. . . .

¶From Captain The Honble. Paul Methuen (formerly A.D.C. to Sir Henry Rawlinson):

. . . I feel that I am only one amongst many who write to express to you our profound sympathy in your loss. As you know, Dick and I were for more than a year together at these Headquarters with Sir Henry Rawlinson, and saw each other frequently afterwards; and I grew as fond of him as if he had been my own brother. A better or a truer friend I have never had. I ask you to accept these few lines of sympathy from a friend who really loved him and mourns his loss. . . .

¶From General Sir Henry Rawlinson, Bart., G.C.B.:

Headquarters, 4th Army, 3rd Dec. 1918.

My dear Lady Sutton.—It is with a very heavy heart that I take up my pen to write you a few lines of sympathy . . . . of all the friends I have lost in this war, and they have been many, none has touched me so deeply as that of your dear son. He was the soul of our Headquarters Mess, and cast the sunshine of his cheery self on all who met and learned to love him. To me he was almost as a son, and I owe him and poor George Boscawen, who first suggested him as A.D.C., many happy hours even in the hard times of war. The King, who was here yesterday, heard the sad news with deep regret. . . .

¶From Lady Rawlinson:

. . . Dick could not have had an enemy in all the wide world, and he will be widely mourned and missed, for he was so lovable and so dear. There are few like him, so kind and unselfish and true. . . . I shall always remember our fortnight at Cimiez where he was so delightful and sweet to us. We shall miss him more than I can say. . . .

¶From Welsh (Dick's London tailor, formerly at Eton):

Words cannot express my feelings at the sad fate of dear Sir Richard. I say "dear" for no other word can I find. I had the pleasure of watching him grow from boyhood to manhood—such a kindly character, such a sunny nature, such a moral help to all around him. No small detail of kind thought for others he ever missed. To me he was an outstanding specimen of what an English gentleman should be. During these last four terrible years when on leave he

never missed calling on me to ask after my welfare, and when returning he, unasked, if possible always saw my wife's brother in France to convey him a few words from home; it was only a small, kind, thoughtful action, but his short life was always full of thoughtful kindnesses and moral support to others in every sphere of life. . . .

¶From Mr. H. Brown, 1st Life Guards:

. . . Dick was the most delightful unspoilt person I've ever met, and adored by us all—I feel his loss awfully. He was always such a dear to me. . . . He will be a great loss to his country, as well as to his relations and countless friends. . . .

¶From the Bishop of Oxford, who had only met him once for a few hours:

I have only just heard the sad news of your son's death. I can't tell you how his devotion to Our Lord and His Church touched and impressed me when I was at Stockcross in Lent. It seems nothing less than a tragedy that he should not have been allowed to come home and do the service he might have done at home to all good causes. But God is wiser than we are. . . .

¶From Colonel The Honble. George Monckton Arundell, 1st Life Guards (who was Adjutant of the Regiment at the time Dick joined):

No words that I can write can convey to you how deeply we all sympathise with you at this time. On all sides I hear expression of the deepest regret, and from the Regiment all ranks mourn his loss. For myself, in Dick I have lost one of my greatest friends. I can still hardly believe that we shall never see him or hear his cheery voice again. During the many years I knew him, I can assure you that I never heard anyone ever say a hard or unkind word about him: it was impossible that he can have had an enemy, his whole character was so far above the mean and little things of life. It seems too hard that after the war is over and peace in sight, that he should be taken; but he has gone where so many of his greatest friends have gone. Although we are too sharply reminded in this war that "in the midst of life we are in death," there is the more sublime thought always with us that in the midst of death we are in touch with the more glorious life—another field of strenuous endeavour—a completion of what he began so well. . . .

¶From Capt. Reginald Hargreaves, M.C.:

. . . I have lost one of the very best friends I ever had. . . . He was the dearest, kindest fellow that ever stepped, and the affection I had for him in Eton days has never changed. Whenever we met, which was not often, he was always just the same, and just as pleased to see me—one couldn't help loving Dick. . . .

¶From Lord Hastings:

. . . That wonderful charm and unselfish nature which made all the world Dick's friend, made me, too, feel proud in his friendship. . . . Not only for you

but for many a very great blank is left. . . . If ever man left behind him a sweet and honoured memory it is Dick, but those recollections of all he already was and all he would have been, make it so hard to spare him now. . . .

¶From Lady Hastings:

. . . He will leave a blank in your life which I know nothing can fill, but all your memories of him I am sure must be pure joy. He had such a wonderful influence for good, and was loved by all who knew him, and I don't think I ever heard his name mentioned without a tribute of admiration and affection being added. . . .

¶From Mr. G. O. Smith, Headmaster of Ludgrove:

. . . It must be some consolation to you to know, and you *can* know, that there was nothing in his brief and happy life that calls for regret. I can most truthfully say that we here who knew him and to whom he was peculiarly dear, . . . share your grief. . . .

¶From the Italian master who had given him lessons in London:

. . . Never shall I forget his gentle ways and the pleasant interviews I had with him. . . . I pray you let me know where his last resting-place will be, so I could as often as is given to me, put there a little token—a flower. He will never know now in deeds how thankful I am to him, only in that way. I shall for ever keep him warm in my heart and thoughts amongst my pleasant memories of those, my dear Souls, who have left me, alas, too soon. . . . May I tell you that *he did worship you.* He told me so more than once. . . .

¶From Colonel The Hon. Claud Willoughby:

. . . You know how deeply we all loved him, but it is not only for the love we bore him, but for the respect, yes, the admiration we had for his character that to-day we mourn his loss. I treasure the knowledge which he gave me, that he liked me and trusted me—this is praise for myself, but I say it because I would like you to know my pride in the knowledge. . . .

¶From Lady Florence Willoughby:

. . . I believe you know how much we loved him. For myself it was a *real joy* whenever I saw his darling face, and one always felt better for being with him because of his dear, upright, wonderful character. . . .

¶From Lord Hartington:

. . . He was one of the very best men who ever lived and England will be a great deal the poorer without him. . . .

¶Extract from letter from J. M. Thompson, who was Corporal-major of Dick's Squadron when he joined the Life Guards:

. . . Dear Sir Richard—he was one of the finest characters I have ever met, a splendid specimen of a true gentleman. . . .

¶Extract from letter from Mrs. Best, neighbour at Benham, and an old friend:

. . . I know so well the great love and perfect understanding that existed between you. . . . I too loved him dearly. He was, and always will remain, a beautiful personality, and quite unlike anyone I have ever known. . . .

¶From E. H. Dempster, masseur at Eton:

. . . I had hoped, since the signing of the Armistice, that I would never have the need to write this letter to you, though I have felt that he would never be spared to us. I know how utterly feeble words are at this time, and can only say that I too loved him very dearly, and his loss has made a blank in my life which will never again be filled. But when I try to realise what it will be to you I am utterly lost, and can only pray that you may be strengthened to bear this, your irreparable loss. I truly loved him as my own son, but your love and devotion to him stands alone. . . . His love for you was peculiar in its depth, sweetness and purity, and I am sure you always had the first place in his heart. . . .

¶Extract from a letter from one of the tenants on Benham estate:

. . . Although a new arrival I quickly learnt what a great hold your son had on young and old who lived on his estate. . . .

¶Extracts from letters from Miss E. Trew:

His power of drawing forth love was so great, I believe there would have been hardly anything he could not have accomplished here. . . .

He radiated happiness, and it was such a joy when he came near—everybody who had ever come in contact with him feels the blank. . . . I do feel so deeply grateful that I am one of his friends. . . . I feel so thankful that it was my privilege to have known Dick. When I look back to the time long ago when he came out to Tenerife and remember him through all the years that have come after, I feel a very deep thankfulness for the love and affection he has ever given. His coming was always like a burst of sunshine, bringing light and warmth and brightness. Mr. Sidney Evans has just been here and he talked of Dick as his pupil when a small boy, and of what a delight he was to him. He recalled how Dick would always talk and ask questions, and talked of him with such warm affection, till there was a break in his voice and he stopped. It is the same with Mr. Conybeare and with all who knew him here [at Eton]—they all loved him and have the happiest remembrance of him. Poor Dempster, he has been in several times and very broken-hearted. What a wonderful welcome Dick is having on the other side. . . .

¶Extract from letter from Mrs. Lethbridge:

Only two days before the sad news came I had been talking to a friend about the young fellows of the present day, and his verdict was—"Well, there could be none better or nicer than dear Dick." . . .

¶Extract from letter from Major Oliver Villiers, D.S.O.:

Dear old Dick—how glad I am that I was able to get a fleeting glance into his life during our two months at Dunkirk. I think it was his extraordinarily simple, straightforward views and ways that always made me love him. One had only to look at Dick's face to know how absolutely straight and "white" he was. . . .

¶From T. E. Boscawen:

Dick has been our kindest and greatest friend. I hope he realised what joy and happiness his friendship gave us, and how thankful we are that he came into our lives so intimately. The many times he burst in on us here and in my office and always brought with him such real joy, and somehow all cares and worries seemed to disappear whilst he was with us—at least that was what Puss and I felt. His life was a great deal to us, Constance, and that knowledge only gives us some little idea what his life was to you. . . .

¶Extract from letter from Father Philip Waggett, S.S.J.E.:

How beautiful is a life finished on *this* earth in truth and honour, unspotted of the world. Truly his life was always guarded by the deep and warm affection in his dear heart. It was as if no evil could touch him. There was health—the beautiful colour of health—in his heart as on his cheek. . . .

¶From Woolley Leigh-Bennett, Coldstream Guards:

. . . Dick's death is an absolute disaster, and if those who knew him only as well as I did feel this, what must his going mean to you? God help you all. . . .

¶Extract from letter of the Rev. Claud Foster, at one time curate of Stockcross:

It does seem so inexpressibly sad that Dick should have been taken at this time. . . . We feel at least that it is for better and greater work than he could do on earth, but oh! the sadness for those left behind! I retain such happy memories of his bright, smiling face that first Sunday morning in the vestry at Stockcross Church, and the kind, genial way he welcomed me, that morning when all seemed strange. . . .

¶From Gerald Micklethwaite, Yorkshire Dragoons, to Philip Astley:

. . . He was more than brother to you, I know. I always envied you for having such a good friend. . . . It does seem hard that having stuck to it all through, he should go down when it is all over. But the best fellows seem to have gone all along. Though he was so well known I never met anybody who had a bad word for him, or in fact anything but the strongest praise. . . .

¶From K. B. Dickson, son of the Vicar of Speen, to Philip Astley:

. . . You cannot tell how awfully sorry I am to hear from my father of the death of your brother. After four years in France, and after surviving two wounds, to fall suddenly a victim to this awful epidemic after hostilities had

ceased, seems doubly sad. . . . One cannot help deeply regretting the loss just at this time of one, who more than most other people, had such a magnificent opportunity at this period of reconstruction of doing so much good to his fellow men. For your brother was a man of very fine character and high ideals, and my father tells me how many schemes he had in view, and with what an unselfish spirit he intended, as in the past, to face the future for the good of his fellow-men, especially those who were less fortunately placed than himself. My father loses in your brother one who was not only a good landlord but a good friend, and one for whom he had the highest admiration, as indeed we all had. . . .

¶From W. P. Blore, Assistant Master at Ludgrove:

. . . Ever since those first happy days at Paraggi, Dick has given me such a full measure of his friendship and affection . . . it has been a privilege the memory of which can never fade. To you Dick has been, I am sure, all and more than all that your highest hopes could ever have wished. And when the first shock of anguish is over, I hope that the memory of the happy past may prove some slight consolation, and help you to bear the burden of this life's sorrow. I had been looking forward so intensely to some happy meeting in the near future, when I might once more have joined you all either at Benham or Varenna, and it is inexpressibly sad to think that this can never be. But forgive me for even mentioning myself. . . .

¶Extracts from letters from Mr. Edward Brooke:

. . . You had been so especially in my thoughts since the 11th [November, 1918] and H. had given me a description of your thanksgiving service, in which I have rejoiced since so much in spirit, and then the cup of gratitude is dashed from your very lips. It is the son of your life, and a son who has brought with him such joy. . . . We know that there are millions bereft like you . . . but one life has sometimes more dependent on it for welfare and happiness than others. The thought that those nearest to you, like Nina, understand your sorrow is but little help now, but you must in time let all to whom your boy was dear share in keeping his memory very living. . . .

. . . You could, I know, with the lessons of life you have had, never allow anyone near you to suffer because of your loss. But *he* was so fond of his life here and so happy in the thought of what he could do with it and in it. What he *had,* had no glamour for me: it was what he *was,* the most lovable and understanding of souls—as if he had lived many decades. . . .

¶From Sir Frederick Carden, Major, 1st Life Guards Reserve:

. . . I feel Dick's death . . . as almost a national calamity . . . and my heart goes out to you in your sorrow. To think that all your years of loving care and guidance should end like this is indeed heartrending. The only consolation I can try to offer you is that those years were not really wasted, for you moulded Dick's character into that of the noblest and best example of an English gentleman, true, brave, and unselfish above all things. We want men like Dick so badly just now. . . . Dick had done his duty so nobly these last four years of

war.... He leaves behind him an example which I hope the future generation will remember and try to follow. I shall always remember him, and place Dick amongst the foremost of the noble band of heroes that I revere and honour....

¶From Dick's mother to a friend:

...I have none but happy memories of him to look back upon, and nothing in his life I could have wished different.... Ever since that hour more than 27 years ago, when he was sent to comfort me in the midst of an overwhelming sorrow, he has been the joy of my life, the light of my eyes, and with his growing years he had become such a rock of strength to me that I always felt I could face anything with his hand in mine.... The letters I have had all tell the same tale of the love he inspired and the extraordinary influence he was for good.... He was so full of happy plans for the good of others—now they *seem* frustrated—but I am sure he will be carrying them out in some unknown way on the other side, less hampered with difficulties than he would have been on this side.... So many of the best young lives have been taken during these four years, that I feel—don't you?—it must be because they were needed beyond the veil, to help in some great work that only the good and noble can accomplish—and that he and the others are finding "meet employment in the spacious fields of Eternity" even now. And when I think of this I can rejoice for him....

¶In the little parish church of Brinsop Dick's family have set their memorials of him: an organ of beautiful tone, given by his brother and sister, and the stained glass window that fills the west wall by his mother. The latter represents Our Lord bearing His Cross, while on either side of Him a soldier and sailor in British uniforms help to support its burden. Behind this central group passes a squadron of cavalry, a black charger of the 1st Life Guards among the white troop, and a trumpeter sounds the note of victory. Beside her Son stands the figure of Christ's Mother, and above, in an upper light, the Angel of Peace holds a scroll inscribed with the words: "La tua volontate è nostra pace." The window, singularly beautiful in design and workmanship, embodies the conception of love and sacrifice that are the essence of the faith in which Dick lived and died.

¶Printed by George W. Jones at The Sign of The Dolphin
in Gough Square, Fleet Street, London, and finished
this Eleventh day of November, One Thousand
Nine Hundred and Twenty-Two.