

Nov 16, 1917

Dear Mother,

We have at last reached our destination + I had a good night's sleep for the first time this week. We traveled XXXXXXXX [censored] + I got very little sleep. There XXXXXXXX [censored] car and a XXXXXXXX [censored] car is about  $\frac{1}{4}$  the length of an American one + about  $\frac{2}{3}$  as wide. We had just XXXXXXXX [censored]. We are learning what war is. This noon we had bread for the first time in three days. We have been living on hard tack, corned beef and cheese. At two or three stations where we stopped though the women gave us hot coffee but it was black coffee + I can't say I enjoyed it very much but it was hot + that was the most important thing. We had an opportunity to see quite a lot of the country while on our way but from what I have seen I prefer XXXXXXXX [censored] England [written in]. XXXXXXXX [censored] England [written in] is much prettier. The houses here are built in bunches. They are built in groups with the walls right against one another. The houses themselves are for the most part a combination of a barn + a house. They keep horses + chickens on one side of the house + on the other side the people live and sometimes they all use the same entrance. XXXXXXXX [censored] the houses are all pretty with red roofs and fancy brick walls and the villages there have a more prosperous and up-to-date look.

We are in a village which I imagine must be quite away above the sea level—I know it isn't very warm here. And mud—outside of a circus lot I never saw such mud. This, I think, is the rainy season and I haven't seen a dry spot on the roads here yet, they are a solid mass of mud. We are not in XXXXXXXX [censored] but are billeted in different houses [censored, but then rewritten] in the village, that is we are XXXXXXXX [censored] four in each house [written in]. There are four XXXXXXXX [censored] Murphy, Fager, Kelly and myself. You know the first two. XXXXXXXX [censored] who live there seem willing to do anything for us. Last night they XXXXXXXX [censored] brought us in down stairs (we live in a room on the second floor on the third floor is the hay loft) [rewritten] and we sat around the fireplace and tried to talk to each other. With my small knowledge of French + Murphy's even smaller knowledge we got on pretty good. The man taught us quite a few words and I think if we are here long we can pick up quite a bit of it + be able to make our wants known at least. We got cots today and will be able

to make ourselves fairly comfortable. There are a lot of pears and apples XXXXXXXX [censored] to ours and the XXXXXXXX [censored] woman says they are [rewritten] “pour vous,” in other words “for us.” Today she brought us up an easy chair. Running water is something unknown here—the conditions are very primitive but we’ll have to make the best of it. The people in the village are all old people + children, there are no young people here at all and there doesn’t seem to have been any rich people here—it is a typical peasant village, the kind I have read about but never expected to live in. Maybe home won’t look good to me when I get back. We’ll never want to leave again. I suppose we’ll be here for the winter so were going to fix our room up as comfortable as we can and make the best of it.

I am feeling quite well even though I haven’t had as much to eat as usual for the last five or six days but I guess that didn’t hurt me any. I hope you and Pa are feeling well. Write soon and let me know. A letter will look awfully good in this place. There is a lot of mail here now but it hasn’t been passed out yet + I am hoping to receive something. Send a few papers if you can as you get more news about the war than we do and besides I like to know how things are getting along at home.

With all my love and lots of kisses for you both I am

Your loving son,

Charles