

Nov 10th
1915.

X.R.H.

France.

My dear old Pat.

It was with the feelings of utmost delight that I received your welcome letter this morning, and I hasten to seize this first opportunity of answering it. And all that sort of twaddle. I've such lots to tell you ^{things} grave & gay, sad & joyous muddling and clear also things which I can't understand and I suppose I never shall, that I really can't make up my mind where to begin. To start off with, you little stinker you never say a word about yourself and how you're getting on in health. We heard rumours that you had been seedy but your letter doesn't mention a word about it so I hope it's all balls. All you say is that they've made an awful mess of it out there. Why I could have told you that, if they hadn't both Greece & Roumania would have been all for us long ago. As it is now, they think we're beat, which again is balls. That's twice I've used that very vulgar expression. There are tremendous rumours going

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round, that Kitchener has gone out East to see how things really are there and now we have a sort of vague idea that we may be shipped off to Serbia at any moment. So its "Go for the briny deep and to Hell with all submarines." I should think ~~if~~ they'd be certain to get some of us. As far as rumour has it, it is only the old "Iron Ration" 3rd Cav Div which are going to move, but you know what rumour is, so its probably all a pack of lies. The trouble is that if we move within the next two months I shall miss my leave, a thing Kitchener ~~is~~ ought to be informed about. Shut up! I know what you're saying. "You've only just come out from home and here am I, been in this God forsaken country for months." I don't care, I shall be seriously put out if I miss my leave. Leave is a very much more difficult matter to manage than it was last year. The trouble is that we have so many troops out here that they have to cut down the numbers or else they couldn't carry them on the leave boat. And the stingy devils won't give us an extra boat.

Old Tony has been very seedy these last two or three weeks, suffering from severe fainting fits lasting some times over an hour. Of course this frightens the soul out of his wife and old

Mumzie. His wife is just about to have a baby so it isn't the very best thing in the world for her as you may well imagine. The local doctors say it is a sort of very bad indigestion brought on by not being able to take any exercise, and I hope to heavens that is all it is. But they don't seem to be quite certain about it so they are sending him up to London to see a specialist. He's still infernally lame on that leg & can only just get along ^{without} ~~on~~ crutches, on ~~his~~ sticks. I don't mind. As long as he gets right after the war, the longer it takes the better. It don't matter a tinkers curse if I get knocked out, but I don't want that lad finished. He's too good by far, and there aren't so many of his sort left. Besides he's got a wife. Poor little kid, she's a real good sort Pat. I was very "fired of" once myself. She got the best of the pick there alright so that's all that matters. — Mumzie is really very fit and full of buck. We stayed down at the Isle of Wight this summer together and I've never seen her so fit as she was then, not for years. She walked me off my legs, going like a T.Y.O. But then she came up to Redhill to stay with some cousins of ours and I suppose the place didn't suit her so well as she began to feel it again. But now she's at home again and doing real well. Thank

A

Harrold.

I saw Gordon Elton the other day at home. He is awfully fit and I think has been passed fit for service abroad again. Now this is absolutely secret and must not be breathed to a soul. I believe he's engaged to a certain Miss Millar sister of one of that name in the 18th, but I'm not sure. We had dinner at the Savoy one night and he it was, if I remember right, who told me you had been steady.

Now this is for your ears, or rather eyes, and your alone. I can't quite understand it myself and I wish to Harrold you were here at this moment to talk it over with ~~you~~ me. I don't pretend to defend myself in any way I try not to make any excuses but I'll put the whole thing before you. I suppose one is not master of one's feelings, that one has no control over them, and that is the only way I can look at it. Do you remember when last we met at Sarcus we discussed certain matters, well to be brief it's ended, off, finished and I've got a feeling of intense relief at it. It's a strange thing but once I really cared for her very very much and I thought more than anything. But I suppose it was the old mistake which is so often made abroad, that amidst of strangers and far from home you make a friendship of

with one person and it gets more & more intimate till you believe its the real thing and you forget home & what it is there. I can't express it on paper. Oh heavens I wish you were here. Anyway when I got home I sort of half realised then. Mum was dead against it from the moment I told her, and I more or less expected that all along. Then it came to the parting of the ways and I knew that I didn't care enough to go against her. Mind, I owe her every thing on this earth and it was a very big test, and I couldn't stand it. I make no excuses, perhaps I ~~should~~^{ought to} have stuck through all, but it would have been hell. No money and no prospects, a life of poverty and hardness and two lives spoiled. It was an awful time and yet through it all I couldn't help feeling sort of relieved, because there was another influence. This is the part I find so hard to put, so inexplicable, of which I am so ashamed in away. Perhaps I've played the swine ~~at~~ and ought to have had a stronger control over myself, but there it is, there is some one else. ~~It~~ I'm frightened of this because I've lost faith in myself. I seem to think "I suppose this same thing happens again and I find I don't care as I ought to. And yet in my heart of hearts I know that isn't so. Yet I can't trust myself. I know now that I liked the other

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as a friend but nothing else, not as I want this one. I like her still as a friend but nothing more. Lord, Pat, it's a topsy-turvy damn world, and sometimes nothing seems to go right. Do you remember that time you stayed with us a couple of days on your way over to Ireland. She was staying in the house too. I remember you talking to me about her and I laughed then. I have known her some time and then I didn't realise, but now it's a very different matter. It's not a thing of a moment but a thing which has grown slowly without my noticing it until, like the little cloud no bigger than a man's hand, it now covers the whole sky. I've talked to you, old Dad, as I wouldn't talk to any one about this thing, but you and I have knocked about a bit together & it don't much matter if we don't meet ~~for~~ write for years, things, with us, are just the same. I can't excuse myself in any way except that I couldn't help it, it's something which I can't pretend to have any power over. And yet I won't trust myself, though I think she cares for me and heaven knows I wish I knew. Well Pat old son I've talked enough about myself and my troubles, and if your head isn't whirling it jolly well ought to be. Let's change the subject.

The regiment is getting on very well and is

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in grand fettle, ready for anything. The most important person concerned, namely myself, is still on H.Q. as signalling bloke and general doer of dirty jobs. I suppose you know by now that we have had a K.D.G. called Wickham put in temporary command till Charles comes back and Giblest commands C sqdn. You're quite right, or as we all say now "vous avez raison", when you say there was some trouble about Bill Stanley. My dear Pat that fellow is very well described with four letters. Not striker. As a soldier he was absolutely useless and yet he was very loath to give up command to Giblest when he came out. After all he is only a Yeomanry major with temporary rank of captain in the army with under half Giblest's service and yet he wanted to have command over him. Well when that was settled he wanted to become 2nd in C. of the regt. and when Watkin came out there was more trouble. Well he refused to go 2nd in C to a Squadron when he had once commanded the regiment so he ~~not~~ did nothing. Then a brilliant idea struck him. He would go home and pull the strings and get himself gazetted into the regular army as 2nd in C. regt. He called a meeting of all the officers and asked them what they thought of the matter. They all replied with one accord "No not at any price". Then Squeaker was chosen to tell him

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that he really wasn't wanted any more and that we would not have him as 2nd in Command, and he was furious and said that he would fight it to the last gasp and promptly wrote to Charlie and told him that all the officers were very keen to have him properly gazetted to the regiment. About this time I put in an appearance and things were very strained. One had to be very careful what one said. Brock is very much the same as usual. Now one thing now another. I don't know, and this is very much "entre nous", (I'm the hell of a French Scholar now) that it was a bad thing that Watkin came out. Brock had B sqdn and a lot of temporary troop leaders whom he treated like dogs. So much so that they would have slugged him I really believe at one time. You know what he was like to us when we first joined. Now I don't worry a curse about him, so far he's been as sweet as butter but I shouldn't wonder if, because I've written this tonight, that he turns round tomorrow and not speak for a month. All the other lads are absolutely ~~4~~ in great form, Joe, John Chesham Bobbie Canning, Sea Lad, Chatter and the rest.

Well, old Lad, I must stop this drivel now if ever you've read as far. Forgive my rubbish and let's have a line again, now and then. Best of luck be with you Pat, Good hunting my son
 wherever
 Pat's