

Transcription

Copy of letter from Col George Francis Murphy on active service in France

1.7.17

Dear Girlie,

I wrote you a couple of letters, - real long ones – and they are now forming part of the recent deposits in the Mediterranean. Here goes for another try.

I have two letters from you. 12/4/17 and 22/4/17 which I shall try to answer. The day you were going to Sydney per car, I was coming back to France from 'Blighty'. Boy evidently enjoyed his ride, since now he asks me for a car for himself. I'm trying for a car when I get back home. That and the pianola will take some cash, will it not? The deferred pay is now about £220 – which of course, will be very handy for a day or two. By the way, all the postcards I sent to those young people at Kensington went down too. – Have you got that puppy yet? I too had a long letter from Mrs Addison, - she writes regularly, and is a most earnest worker.

I am glad indeed that Mother has got rid of that business now. I haven't heard from her for some time now.

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I am afraid you will not see us home this Xmas. Even if Peace came tomorrow, the transport. Anyhow, we don't ask when the war will end, we know quite well that very little could be done to prevent our winning. And we don't want to come here again. There is a cold hate of the hun amongst us all, and we want to get onto German soil for a few days. Who is the Red Cross Lady you know in London? That about finishes your letters. I do not write much in reply to them, because I want to avoid any semblance of just acknowledging your letters.

Well, to give you news of myself. Last time I wrote I was very poorly indeed but since then we have had a glorious rest, and are still enjoying it. Yesterday Holman came to see us all, and I caught a beautiful cold fooling around in the rain, but that is an item. On the 22nd June I went on leave to Paris. Now I eat, sleep and live till I can get back there. I had 4 days there; It is the most wonderful city I have seen. Incidentally, I bought you a bag there, the best I could get, for

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Your birthday. I hope you like it. I am sending it back by Capt Hobbs, one of my officers who is going home wounded. – In case I miss him the parcel will go by post from England. One of my officers takes it over to 'Blighty' tomorrow, but if he misses Hobbs, then he will post it for me. He also takes the long promised French Bible for Dorothy. I had a job to get it, even in Paris. – I have also some books for the bairns which I am sending by post from here. They are the best I could get for the purpose. –

Well, to tell you of Paris. It is a beautiful city, and a city of beautiful people. The girls are simply lovely, and they not only have beautiful dresses, but they know how to wear them. I vowed that Boyo would come to Paris some day, - it is an education in itself. – I went to Notre Dame, but although the exterior is very fine, I do not think it comes up to Amiens. – The church De Madeleine is rather flamboyant, - Napoleon had an idea of converting it into a Roman temple. It is rather fine, for all that. A few of the churches I reserved for

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A later visit. The larger shops are very fine indeed. Au Printemps is a splendid place, - with a magnificent roof. So also is the Louvre and La Regle. – a shop for women's good only. They are magnificent places. The Rue de la Paix is a very fashionable shopping quarter, reputed to have the

finest display of jewellery in the world. The Art Galleries were closed, as also the Hotel d'Invalides (Napoleon's tomb.) Though I had a good look at the building itself. The Place de la Concorde is the finest square in the city. A fine obelisk from Luxor marks the spot where Louis and Marie Antoinette were beheaded. The fountains are very fine replicas of those in Rome, whilst round the square are statues representing each city. Lille and Alsace Lorraine are covered with wreaths. We hope to remove those from the former this year. Near this square is the Jardins de Tuilleries – a very fine garden indeed. I listened to a performance of Carmen there.

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The trees are trained overhead as a canopy and could easily shade 10000 people. It is a beautiful spot. From the Place runs the Boulevard de Champs Elysses right up to the Arc de Triomphe and then on to the Bois du Boulogne. This latter is a fine wood, with fashionable restaurants, - a dream of beauty. – I spent two most enjoyable afternoons there. Of restaurants I must confess to some disappointment. They are fine places, - probably the war and my hard luck in striking two meatless and tartless days explains away most that was lacking.

I got on well with the language difficulty, - the slang had me thinking at times, but for all that I had little trouble. I took Alan with me. – We went to the Opera – Rigoletto. - It was a magnificent performance. The building had me in raptures. The Foyer as it is called is the prettiest thing I've seen for many a long day. The mural decorations are very fine – the chandeliers – mantels &c, I could not keep my

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eyes from. The programme was soaked by an over turned lamp, but I'm sending it all the same.

I heard that Jack Paul is getting on well. – I heard bad reports at first.

The ribbon in the bible is the piece Gen Birdwood presented me with. – I haven't got the medal yet. If I cable you that I have a Belgian decoration, it will be the Order d'Officier – But remember pst experiences and don't be over sanguine.

It is over two years now since I saw you dear face, but we will be together next year surely. There is no girl like my girl.

Your loving

George.