Letter No. 79

Keswick.
Sept. 9th 1916.

Dear Mother.

When I wrote you last Sunday Mildred & I fully expected to leave London on Tues. a.m., but in spite of spending hundreds of shillings on taxi cabs we couldn't finish getting the necessities on Monday. The distances in London seem so great, & during war time many of the shops are shortstaffed that one is apt to waste time etc; then we ran into several people we knew, & you know how Lopsters that is. Anyway we stopped - went to the bank - had our hair shampoo'd (funnily enough we went to a place near Regent St - which I am inclined to think I went to when we were in London ten years ago) & certainly they did it beautifully. When we came out found it pouring with rain & I still had to call for my new rain-coat @ Whiteleys, & as we had tickets for the theatre that night gave up all thought of getting away in the a.m.. Had dinner comfortably & then went to the Lyric to see a play called "Romance" in which Fred

Keane who is most fascinating played the principal part. The prologue shows an old man talking to his grandchildren, & starts to tell them the story of his first love - then the real play commences, nearly the story of his mans life - being in the time of Cromwell - of course as always in in London the whole thing was beautifully staged & the play most interesting. The following morning we got my rain-coat, made final arrangements regarding our trip - packed, stored our excess luggage, & then finally after un-expectedly went out to dinner & the theatre. Mildred had written Mrs Spring (Mrs Wilson's sister) saying she was in London — & her husband phoned to say how sorry he was his wife was out of town, wouldn't we have dined etc with him, & of course we did. Went up to his own house for dinner, such a comfortable home, & full of beautiful things - of course it was an informal meal, for we only accepted after 6 p.m. They have their own motor & he more. Hence felt luxurious, & thoroughly enjoyed the outing. Went to see Gerald du Maurier in "The Old Country" after a good play, but so well done, we

engaged every minute of it. Of course so many things in London have changed. Very few people in the theatre are dressed, when compared with other days — by far the larger majority of the men are in khaki — the streets are so dark at night. Unless one knows London well it is impossible to find one's way around. The absence of officials of all descriptions ~~are~~ is most conspicuous, fewer porters at the stations, none standing around the tube stations — any end of girl-conductors on the motor bus & they do their work mighty well too — yet many seems to be spent merely the pleasure resorts — of all descriptions are filled to over-flowing. They say that is where England differs from France, for in Paris one never sees a piano played! Of course the Land as the City has been hit, it has been much worse for the French, & they seem so much more in the thick of it all.

Well we left London @ 10 a.m. Sun. & didn't reach Keswick until 6.45 our train being nearly two hours late. We had made up our minds to go to one in-expensive lodging house, & so

made strength for the air & only soldiers (outside of Forts) we had — started only to be told the place was full, but after meeting the land-lady decided we weren't sorry, for she was anything but a cheerful soul. On telling our dismay, he informed us he knew of a good place & brought us here, & we are smitely delighted. Our ordinary little English house, which are bit of attractive furniture but — clean as a new pin, run by an awfully decent honest type of woman & her daughter who do all their own work. We have a small bed-room & our own sitting-room where our meals are served etc. Because mention of us want to be bothered ordering our food etc. so we leave all that to Mrs Simm much to her surprise! For our private sitting-room & bed-room we are paying 7 shillings per the week!!! The food charges remain to be seen but imagine it won't be expensive. The house is right in the village (as all are except the most expensive) Our sitting-room is a bow out, across the road there is a beautiful garden, in the distance the loveliest of hills. I smitely long to have you here with us, for you

bored love it, & certainly if ever you come to England again you must spend your figure holiday somewhere in this district. It is simply perfect, & there isn't a road or a field that mars its beauty. Such lovely rolling hills, many of them beautiful mountains, all looking trim & cultivated, the grass is most wonderful green — everything in such luxuriance. Even the annuals look just as though they had reached the best of everything, & hence died. I already feel the benefit of our surroundings. It's simply great to get right away from everything & everyone connected with the C.A.M.C. & to be where it isn't even necessary to talk about it.

This a.m. we awoke to find the sun shining much to our surprise, for if one expects bad weather anywhere in England, it is in the Lake District, & certainly they have been having an awful spell of rain in London lately. Having breakfasted in bed most luxuriously on the freshest of boiled eggs — thin bread & butter & the nicest of coffee, we got up leisurely, dressed (there is a nice modern bath-room) & wandered through the lanes to the Lake

- Derwent water - which is simply perfect. I won't go into details or I will never end.
In the afternoon we went on one of the many coaching trips, which took us through beautiful country to Thirlmere, which is not quite so attractive as Derwentwater - Thirlmere is the lake which was I believe supplies the whole of Manchester with water - We stopped at a little old Inn & had tea, came back by a different road leaving had a wonderful afternoon. Since dinner I have been writing you & it is now 10 p.m. & time for us to depart to bed.
I must get limbered to take a snap of me in my new suit; that will tell you more than I can. My hat is just a little blue silk affair with soft crown, & a bright blue flower in front is the only trimming. I got a white crêpe de chine blouse for special occasions, & a khaki colored one bought to go with my walking skirt when I walk out, does for everyday. One extra cheap little skirt, & rain-coat completes my outfit, & small as it is, it seems to run into quite a bit of money. However

However it turned to be, & certainly it is nice once again to be out of uniforms.
Mildred managed to have a talk with Mrs. Macdonald's assistant, & learned definitely she was to go into the Office & in all probability Ivril be stationed in London for a time at least. Perhaps sometime in the future we may both be sent to France, but we feel as we have asked to be kept together, we have no right to ask for anything further, & after all we have been fortunate in seeing what we did out East & aught to be willing to take our share of the work in England.
Three weeks from ~~Sunday~~ Monday we have to be in London, but beyond a week here folks that we have no definite plans; a good deal depends on how we feel. In the meantime we are enjoying ourselves thoroughly — & surely the change combined with good English beef, thick rich cream, & the other good things of this country, aught to give us back the few pounds we've lost in the East. Love to Uncle Bo. & kisses for you our dear self from Julie.