

BERNARD IRELAND MACALPINE A MEMOIRE OF 1914 - 19

Letters 1915

February 1915

(first page missing)

... French soldier who was stationed at one of the British army depots south of Dieppe. We had an interesting talk about the war; and he gave us an amusing description of his examination for the interpreter's job, where they all had little dictionaries in their pockets, and where he tried to fail (?) from a University professor till he found the professor didn't know any more than he did.

We were expecting to find Paris very dark at night, but it seems to be lighted pretty much as if there was no war. In fact, there's really less sign of war here than in London. There are plenty of soldiers about of course, but otherwise the streets look pretty much what one imagines they do in ordinary times; no doubt quieter at night – all the cafés close at 8 – but quite light; and then of course there are no recruiting posters all over the place as there are in London.

We found our Paris man had no directions about three of us, including myself, so we've had to wait a day for instructions, and are to go on today. I'm not going to Sermaize as I expected, but to Fête Champenoise. Whether I shall go on later to Sermaize, I don't know.

Now I must get my bag packed and get off.

Much love, Bernard.

(On the reverse of this page)

Woolman Le Tenebreux

Maclaren L'Officier Russe

“Que'est-ce qu'il fait avec vous? Pas grand chose)

Franklin Casse tout

Nickalls Le petit gamin

Shaw Le petit gros

Tattus Le petit chauffeur dans un cabriolet

T.E.H Le grand gros Le Deputé

Fardon Le médecin anglais

Miss D La grande violette (at Chalons)

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(Transcriber's note: Dr. Fardon is the father of another Dorking Friend, Rachel Fardon, by coincidence. He was in the Friends Ambulance Unit. His daughter says he told of being blown up by a shell and finding himself unhurt, at the bottom of a bomb crater.)

And a quotation from the Trojan Women, Euripides, trans. Murray.

Fére Champenoise

Marne

Wed. 10th Feb. 1915

My dear Auntie,

My last letter was finished rather hurriedly, as it was time to go for the train. We excited considerable interest in Paris. It was amusing when two of us were walking some little distance behind the others to see the whole street turn round to stare after them. Occasionally someone would sing out "Good day" or "Good morning" (regardless of the time of day) in English as we passed, or we would hear someone say "Soldats Anglais" (English soldiers). They were having what they called the Journée du soixante-quinze – day of the 75th – selling flags and medallions with pictures of their big 75 gun in aid of their soldiers at the front. So we had various fair damsels offering us these in the street, and at the station several of them rushed at us and began sticking them in our coats at a great rate gratis. Another enthusiastic ally in the shape of a young fellow rushed past us waving his cap and yelling at the top of his voice "Vive la Bretagne" (Long live Britain); at which we grinned, and when we had had time to think, remarked, "Vive la France" (long live France) in a rather less vigorous voice than his.

As we'd lost a day by our wait in Paris it was thought better that we should come on here on Sunday, so we got our safe conduct, and came on by an afternoon train – four of us, the three who had been delayed at Paris, and one other who had been driving some agricultural engineers round, and having seen them off back to England was coming to settle down here. It was a very slow journey, and when we got to Sezanne, about 12 miles short of this, we found there was no train any further, and had to stay the night there.

We came on after an early breakfast, and began to see a few signs (though not many) of the fighting – an occasional trench, or a grave with a little wooden cross on, or a wood littered with empty meat tins.

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We got here just as people were setting out to go to various jobs in the villages. Fête Champenoise is a little country town which the party here uses as a centre. We have a room where we all feed together, a garage, a store and workshop (where they make up window frames and doors and such things), and we sleep in various houses in the town. I've got a room in the hotel, as I'm only here for a few days. Probably I shall go on tomorrow to Vitry. I'm waiting overnight to see Harvey who comes back tonight to Fontenelle, where a new party is starting work.

There was no damage done here, except that the electric light works were burned down. The work all lies in the villages round. I've sent you picture postcards of them, which will show you more or less what they look like. In some of them almost the whole of the houses have been burnt – either deliberately or set on fire by the shells – and there's nothing standing but the outside walls; simply rows of ruined houses and farms and scarcely anyone living in the whole village. Apparently, further east, in the Vitry district, the houses were largely of wood, so that there is nothing at all left of them; they say that at Sermaize, where I may be going ultimately, there's almost nothing to be seen above ground, except the Casino, where I gather the German Officers lived, and where now all the people of the place are crowded together. There the work consists of putting up new wooden houses; here the houses are built of brick and stone, mainly a kind of sun-dried brick, and the work is to build up some kind of little house, or whatever is wanted, using the walls that are still standing. We're not attempting to rebuild the houses; usually we try to use what was a barn or outhouse and build up whatever is wanted there, so as to not be in the way when the final rebuilding of the house comes.

On Monday I spent most of my time going round in a car with one or two architects to some of the villages. They were arranging for some work to be done, and incidentally showed me a fair amount of the work. On Tuesday I had another round in the car, going with one of the chauffeurs to fetch a case of window glass from Champenoise, one of the villages at which the party worked from their first centre at Esternay. The schoolmaster there showed us some wallmaps the Germans had slashed up to amuse themselves, and a leather case containing plans of the village, part of which they had torn and other pages of which they had emptied the inkpots on.

Friday Feb 12 I began this letter on Wednesday and had better get it off tonight. I had a more or less slack day on Wednesday. Yesterday I put in a day's work helping to roof a shed we are putting up to house some agricultural machines we are presenting to one of the villages here.

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Today I've been cutting a tree up into firewood for a woman in another village who has no one to cut it for her. She's quite a big farm house which is all a ruin; we've already put up her pig-styes and a stable for her.

Probably I shall be staying on here. They had intended putting me to help in relief work at Vitry and Sermaize; but that particular scheme has either fallen through or been postponed; and I'm probably wanted here to take charge of a car.

Very much love. I hope you are keeping well.

B.

Fête Champenoise

Marne

10th Feb 1915

Dear Mr. Brooks,

Thank you for your letter of the 4th, which has just reached me here.

I have been speaking to Wetherall, the chief motor man here, about the matter of the car. He says that, after working with all the various American cars, he would strongly advise the Overland rather than any of the others, and would certainly not take the Studebaker in preference; also that they are badly in need of another car of the 5-seater kind.

May I ask you then to proceed at once and arrange with the Morris Garages Ltd. for an Overland?

And would you also order with it

1 extra tyre (making 6 altogether – I think 5 are supplied)

2 extra tubes in addition:

2 valves, complete:

spare lamp bulbs:

Sufficient Ferodo for relining 2 brakes (if the brakes are Ferodo-lined,
of which I am not sure):

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Possibly, of course, you may have already ordered a Studebaker; but if so, I suppose there will not be much difficulty in changing.

I am writing this definitely because you speak of lack of knowledge of requirements here as the only reason for not proceeding at once. They are quite definite here that, in addition to the need for a lorry, another car is wanted either for here or for Vitry (I gather that one for each would not be amiss) and that an Overland will do what is wanted. As you know, the Napier is hors de combat and will be so for another 2 or 3 weeks; the Straker is leaving us before long; at the moment the Austen is laid up and it will take some days to get a needed spare part; and with the stock of cars none too large as it is, one laid up for repairs; a serious inconvenience.

Yours sincerely

B.I.Macalpine.

P.S. Since writing the above I have discussed the matter with Mr. Harvey, and have sent in a wire to be sent from Paris asking you not to buy a Studebaker. I may perhaps come back to bring the car out, but will write further on that point.

(Transcriber's note: in researching the Overland car, I learnt that the Belgian Government had, at the beginning of the war, taken delivery of 300 Overland cars, for use in the war conditions: a feather in the cap of the company, who thenceforth used this as part of their marketing.)

Fête Champenoise

11th Feb 1915

Dear Mr. Brooks,

I sent in my wire to Paris yesterday with one of our men, asking you not to buy a Studebaker, but my letter was too late to be sent by him, and as the post from here is uncertain, I thought it best, after talking things over again with Mr. Harvey, to wire you this morning asking you to get an Overland. My letter of yesterday will explain matters to you.

I intend coming home to bring the car over here, and so shall be able to see to the final details of equipment for myself. I do not know how long the Morris Garage will take to deliver, but will come over when I hear the car is to be ready. If it should be ready at once, perhaps you would wire me.

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Yours sincerely

B.I.Macalpine.

As from Chez M. Skepper

103 Ave. Parmentier

Paris 11:2:15

Dear Sirs,

In further reference to our correspondence as to my buying an Overland or other car, I have consulted my people out here, and this morning have wired to Mr. Brooks asking him to buy an Overland.

May I return again to the question of my motor cycle and side-car? As I mentioned in a previous letter, I left them with you when I bought my Morris Oxford at the beginning of June to be sold by you, and was given to understand that you would get me a purchaser at £40. You have then had the cycle eight months, including two clear months before the war began; and it is cold comfort, in answer to my request, to be told that your motorcycle and car departments are separate. The one department is meeting me very well in the matter of allowing for my car; the other has let me down rather badly over the cycle; and I think I am justified in pressing my request that, in view of the long delay there has been, the firm should allow me the money I ought to have had from its cycle department as an additional **part** payment for the new car.

Yours truly

B.I.Macalpine.

P.S May I trouble you to reply to above address, but also to let me have a copy of the reply sent to c/o Friends War Victims Relief Committee, Ethelburge House, 91 Bishopsgate, London, E.C., as I am coming home to fetch the Overland, and may miss the letter to Paris?

(Note from transcriber: evidently between February 11th and March 5th, Bernard had collected his new car and got over to France with it; see below.)

Société des Amis

BERNARD IRELAND MACALPINE
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Fête Champenoise,
Marne, France
5th March 1915

My dear Hilda,

I have been meaning for some days to write you a letter for your birthday, but I'm afraid I find myself unconscionably lazy at night, and draughts are a serious counter-attraction to letter-writing; also as I don't know how long my letter will take to reach you, it has been possible to put off for a day on each of the last few days. However, I'm afraid this is the last day that can possibly catch you on your holiday, so I must get to work. Many happy returns of the day.

I have been moving in high society today. We have had a visit from General Azibert (I'm not sure how to spell him) the general of the 5th Army under whom we are working. He came with four of his staff to inspect our work and went round with Mr. Harvey. They had two motors of their own, and mine was added to the procession. I led the way round, with Harvey and Lieutenant Barnet (the Officer who has been more particularly looking after us) in it. After doing some business at the Mairie, the General started by inspecting our workshop and clothing stores, on the premises of a Bank, and one of the officers took a photograph of a group of the General and staff with those of us who were about. Then off we went in the motors to Normie, one of our villages; I put my car at its best speed, with the result that I got a request from the chauffeurs behind not to go so fast as they couldn't keep up, and a similar request from the General – whether for the sake of the chauffeurs or of himself, I don't know. At Normie two of our men were busy whitening the inside wall of one of the little houses we have built, using a spray worked by a pump. This took the fancy of the visitors, so the two had to stand outside and work the spray on the outside bricks (and incidentally the window) while M. le Capitaine took a photo. The M. le Capitaine discovered he had scratched his finger, so out came my pocket ambulance case and on went a bandage. “Les Anglais ont tout ce qu'est necessaire” said M. le C. After which we went to go on to two other of our villages, Lenharré and Morains and inspected more houses; and then the General went off home.

I have now left my quarters in the hotel and settled down in a more permanent room, and a very nice one, at the grocer's. They are very nice people, and with practice I hope to be able to extend the subjects of conversation with them as time goes on.

I got your letter at Paris on my way out.

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Much love to you both.

B.

Société des Amis
Fête Champenoise
Marne, France
Sunday 14th Mar 1915

My dear Auntie,

Here I am, nearly three weeks away, and not a decent letter written to you. I'm afraid you'll think I've been neglecting you, and I really ought to have written more. But I can say I have done a fair amount since I left, and the car has done 1450 miles in the three weeks.

I wired to Plato from the station the morning I left, and he and Bryan met me at Oxford and had lunch with me. I was glad to have another look at him, and found him fairly cheerful. Then we went and got the car, which was looking quite nice in its new paint, with a star and the words "Société des Amis" on each side of the bonnet, and a red cross on each side of the car, and "Société des Amis" in red on the windscreen. The grey has rather more of a blue tint in it than I expected when I saw only a little of it, but I like it quite well.

I drove it off, taking Plato out for two or three miles, when he left me and walked back to Oxford. I found the car quite easy to get into, apart from a little stiffness in the gears; altogether I am quite well pleased with it. It brought out a heavy load without any difficulty, and with the springs strengthened – I think I told you I had that done – takes bad roads quite well. It's got an electric engine starter, which is the envy of the chauffeurs, as it obviates starting up with the handle in front: - they all promise to crow when the starter goes wrong. The horn and lights are also electric, and form an excellent means of amusing the juvenile population which gathers while I wait outside when I've taken the doctor out to the patient.

On the way from Oxford to London I called in at Jordans and saw the remnants of an Ambulance Unit camp. I called for the stretchers we had there and took them into London in case we want them brought out: I hadn't room to bring them out myself.

I loaded up in London on the Tuesday, filling up the back of the car sundry packages of tools, a

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bale of clothes, and set off for Folkestone. There we got the cars on the pier, found the boat wasn't going till 3 or 4 am, and went off to get some supplies and have a doze in a hotel.

I expect you saw that the Folkestone – Boulogne boat had been fired at and missed by a submarine. It was the boat we crossed on, and it had just happened on the journey from France immediately before; which added a spice of interest to our crossing. We had a calm night and crossed at full speed with all lights out except one low down by the water at the stern. What that was for I don't know, but we speculated as to whether it was meant to shine on the water at the stern and make it appear like the bow. There was apparently a line of watching boats on each side of us. We couldn't see what kind they were, but we were never out of sight of a masthead light. The boats seemed to be stationary, and one or two were signalling with lights.

We got into Boulogne about half past five or six o'clock in the morning. The car couldn't be unloaded for an hour or so later, so we left it and went to a hotel to get a few hours' sleep before going on tin ?? the afternoon, as I didn't fancy a full day's driving with a new car and a strange rule of the road, and no sleep the night before. The hotel we went to was pretty full, mostly with British Officers, as Boulogne is the British army base, and we had to be content with a not very attractive attic: but we managed to sleep in it. After a couple of hours or so I woke up and find it snowing: so I got up to see how my car was faring and found it fairly well snowed into on the quay, with the man who had been seeing to it just putting the hood up. So I got it to the hotel garage and got the snow out and the inside of the car cleaned out; by which time it was lunch time, so we lunched, spent some time getting our permit, finding out that the British Red Cross people wouldn't give us free petrol, and finding a garage where we could buy it, and set out en route for Paris. I discovered that the little clock I had had fitted, had been wrenched off and stolen on the way over.

We went as far as Abbeville that night, and encountered a fairly vigorous snow storm on the way. The road climbs up moderately high south of Boulogne and the country is bleak and exposed, so that it was pretty cold; and it's awkward to drive with the snow sticking on the windscreen and making it impossible to see, so that your passenger has to clean it every few minutes. The same thing happened to me the other evening again, and the windscreen isn't very well arranged for such weather; you have to open it so wide if you want a clear view not through the glass. But the car is very snug in bad weather with the hard outside curtains up. Unfortunately, the side curtains on that occasion were at the bottom of the goods at the back.

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Abbeville, like Boulogne was full of British soldiers; and we couldn't get into the first hotel we tried. Next day we went on to Paris, without any adventures. The main objects of interest we saw were two bridges which had been blown up to keep the Germans back; one a big railway viaduct with a couple of arches gone and a piece of line dangling down in the gap: the other a bridge over the river on one road, where we had to make a detour over a wooden bridge near by. (Excuse cocoa stains).

On the Thursday after a night in Paris, we came on here, having added a few more parcels to our load. Our way brought us through Montmirail near which is a small party of our men (including Innes) at a village called Fontenelle. We were lunching at Montmirail, intending to run out to Fontenelle before going on, when in walked two of the Fontenelle people. They had driven in for some goods with their car – one of two second hand cars picked up in Paris which some of our men transformed into lorries: the other one is very busy here carting timber and other things to our different building jobs – and had seen our car standing outside the café. We ran out after lunch and saw the whole party at work, the same kind of work we are doing here, though they are only a small party and have only one village to work in.

A little before that I managed to kill a hen – or perhaps I should say a hen managed to get itself killed. The hens here are even worse than the ones in England for running across the road or running along in front of the car. We stopped and went back. The owners of the hen were very friendly, said it was no matter, only a little accident, and wanted to give us the hen on the ground that we, as English, were their friends. So eventually we took it and I paid them three francs for it, which they didn't want to take. Then they offered us a friendly drink, and Haycock in his best French – which is about as good as mine and a little less bashful – explained that we were teetotallers; after which, and a little conversation about the battle and the Germans, we went on our way. We were within sound of the guns, as we are here, and the Germans had been in that village, which was partly destroyed, and had treated the people badly.

One gets different accounts of the Germans in different places. Here they had behaved badly, and these people were very bitter against them. So they are in most of the villages, a good many of which they set on fire deliberately. Others were destroyed by shells, sometimes German and sometimes French, and here the people will recognise it as a necessary part of war. In other places no damage was done, and sometimes the people will tell you that the Germans weren't always as bad as people say. Here in Fête Champenoise they destroyed the electric light works –

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all our rooms have useless electric lamps in – and had a drunken orgie on the contents of a champagne warehouse, which is now in consequence empty and used as our garage. I was in another little town yesterday where they had been for six days and had done no damage. I had a talk with an old woman there about them. My conversations with the natives are not always very enlightening: I can manage to say most of what I want to say if I keep my wants in that direction within strict limits; but it's another matter when it comes to their more lengthy and speedy replies. However, this one was easier to follow than most are. She told me that their Mayor had told them to make bread for the Germans and give them all they wanted, and so they were well treated, though not paid for things. There was a house door on which the Germans had written in chalk "Güte leute, bitte -" (I couldn't read the last word), so "Good people, please -" meaning that they were to be treated well. The writing is still there, and I was asked to translate it.

This same good lady wanted to know if I was too young to be a soldier. People here, where all the men are soldiers, find it hard to understand why we aren't, and one of the biggest and strongest of the men was once asked if he was an invalid, seeing he wasn't in the army. And of course, those who don't know us and just see us in our uniform take us for soldiers and enthuse accordingly.

Altogether, people don't find it easy to make us out. It happens that in France the word "Société" is used not only for what we call a society, but also for a commercial company: (for instance, the place where we have our workshop is normally a bank, and is labelled "General de something or other" At Derraise some people have got it into their head that we are a business concern doing the thing for profit, and expect to have to pay for our huts; in fact, some kind soul has been suggesting that we are over-charging!

Then very few people abroad know anything about the Society of Friends, apart from us. There have been one or two amusing accounts of us in the papers. A local paper near here spoke of "the Society of Friends, founded by forty young Englishmen," and Mr Harvey has been described as the President of the Society. The other day an officer who had been in England and spoke English quite well came up to me and asked about us. He wanted to know how it was organised, and whether it did anything in time of peace – he had apparently heard of their work in the war of 1870. I asked him if he had heard of the Quakers, as they were the same as the Society of Friends, and he said Oh yes, he had heard of them, they had a big settlement at Salt Lake City in America!

People seem quite impressed with the fact that we are doing our work for nothing. Some soldiers

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came up and spoke to me one day when I was waiting with the car in one of our villages, and one of them commented on the fact that it was done for nothing. Another day in Chalons a soldier came up who is an old friend of Mr Harvey's, and who spoke about the work and how good it was, and said nobody in France would have thought of doing anything of the kind. And they all wanted to know how long we think the war will last – this last man asked me how long people in Britain were expecting it to be. Nobody seems to want much more of it, though they all seem to recognise that it will be hard to drive the Germans back, and no one thinks of stopping till that is done.

Well, now I must stop and get to bed; chauffeurs have to be ready in good time in the morning – though I, having the comfortable car, get perhaps the easiest work of them, getting the doctors and architects to take round, so having plenty of waits and no timber to haul about. I hope I haven't omitted to answer anything in your letters. The last was written a week ago, on the 7th and came, I think, a couple of days ago. You will have enjoyed Mr Jones' visit. I hope you have been well and not tired out by your company.

I'm sorry The Friend hasn't had some in about us in particular. But then, we're modest folk. There's always a bit about some of our work; and wasn't there something about Fête Champenoise a few weeks ago?

With very much love, Your loving nephew, B

Love to H who I hope got my letter reasonably near her birthday; and remember me to Lizzie and Mercy.

Société des Amis
Fête Champenoise
Marne, France
24th Mar 1915

My dear Auntie,

This should reach you somewhere about your birthday. Many happy returns. I'm sorry I can't send anything more than a letter, but it comes with very much love and all good wishes.

Your letter of the 18th reached me two days ago, and I am glad to get it. I am glad Plato is coming

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to you again. It will cheer him up, and you will enjoy having him. I'm just sending him a p.c. tonight.

We have had some days of lovely spring weather in the last week, sunny and warm, so much so that I begin to think of dust and hay fever, and have written Dr. Steinthal for a copy of his hayfever prescriptions. We've also had some pretty cold days and frosty nights mixed in. The weather seems to make a good deal of difference to the look of the country round here. Sometimes you think it dull and flat and uninteresting. But at other times, when the sun is on it, it looks really nice. It's pretty flat just here, undulating, but with nothing high until some small hills in the distance, and with very little to break up the view. The roads, most of them, are as straight as can be. The main roads are absolutely as straight as a ruler for miles and miles – excellent for motoring if you want speed and the surface is good – but deadly dull for walking, - and from the top of some of the rises you can see your road literally miles ahead. Oftener than not there is a single line of trees on either side, so that you can sometimes tell a side road from a mile away by the line of trees. There are no hedges at all, either at the side of the road or between fields: one can see how much easier it would be to manoeuvre large bodies of troops in country like this than in England., with all its walls and hedges in the way. Here there's nothing in the way except the woods, of which there are quite a lot round here: many of them small ones or long narrow strips, planted by the military for purposes of defence.

Just now people are doing what they can in the way of ploughing, so as not to lose this year's harvest. The government is providing a certain amount of seed, and our relief workers are supplementing with gifts of seeds for the gardens and smallholdings. I took out a bundle of parcels for one of the villages yesterday in my car, and left them with the schoolmaster for distribution. In some cases the men have got home on leave from the army for a few days to do the ploughing, in others the troops billeted in a village behind the lines have been lent to the villagers for the purpose. But of course they are shorthanded everywhere, and one sees quite a lot of women doing the work. I don't know how much of the farm work is done by the women here in ordinary times, but they certainly have to do it now. Another difficulty is the shortage of horses, as almost all have been taken for the war. One notices in driving about that nearly all the horses are a bit afraid of the motors. He reason simply that the army has got nearly all the horses and those being used in the fields and about the roads are the young ones, scarcely half broken in and not yet used to cars. The army people are lending a certain number of horses about when they can spare them.

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Last night, in driving the doctor home from a round in some of the villages I passed a horse taking the plough home from the fields, with a woman sitting sideways on the horse. Apparently neither of them saw or heard me till I came past them from behind; whereupon the horse began to dance and the woman rolled off backwards. Fortunately she wasn't hurt. A little further on I passed a cart with a led horse behind and a little dog running at the side. The horse began kicking when we came up, and in avoiding it I ran over the dog. It wasn't killed, and seemed more dazed than damaged, so I hope it recovered. Such are the difficulties of motoring here; and hens and dogs are more suicidal and carters deafer even than in England.

My car has now done just over 2000 miles. It has been a little troublesome in the last few days over starting in the morning, but I think we have cured it.

My day's work usually begins with a run out taking some of the builders out to their work in a village, which may be anything from four to ten miles out. They take their lunch out with them and stay there till evening, when one of the cars calls for them. After depositing them I come back and start out, perhaps a round with the doctor, or with the architects on a tour of inspection, or with Miss Denham, who does both nursing and relief work, to see her cases – sometimes to dress a wound, sometimes to make enquiries about relief needed, or to take out pieces of clothing to the people who have been visited already – or occasionally it's a round with Ball, who is doing relief work on the agricultural side, giving out seeds and implements; you might have seen me once or twice with the back of the car filled with rakes and hoes and such things for distribution.

Sometimes the various people do a joint tour, and the car is loaded with one architect, Ball, Miss Denham, and sundry rakes and parcels. We arrive at a village and the various people proceed to their various jobs, and lose one another and keep one another waiting, then when they've all been collected we proceed to another village and do the same. And so home for lunch, anytime from twelve to two – more likely the latter if it is a round with the doctor. The afternoon is spent in a more or less similar way, and I finish up by fetching the builders home from one or two of the villages, in time for dinner at half past six.

Sometimes I get a special journey further afield. One day I had an invalid soldier to take to hospital at Sezanne. Another day we had a car to go to Chalons. The message came to us that it was a maternity case, and I took the car round to the house with Miss Denham,, who was going with her to Chalons. Miss D went in and found them all very tearful, and tried to cheer them up, how nice it would be before long, etc. etc., only to find that it wasn't a maternity case at all, but a case of

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lunacy. The people were refugees from the Ardennes, and the patient a young woman whose husband and brothers were at the war, and whom the war had driven mad. We took her father and mother with her and saw her safely in the asylum at Chalons.

On the return journey we brought home a boy of eleven from hospital to his house at La Villeneuve, which is the furthest west of the villages we are working in; indeed, I think the work was started from the previous centre at Esternay. We've only done one job there, on the house where this little boy lives with his grandparents, but it's one of the most interesting. I must send you a picture postcard of the house some day. One of the corners was blown clean away by a shell. But the roof was an exceptionally strong one – it excites great admiration in our architects – and has held itself up and saved the house from collapsing, and it has now been repaired and the walls rebuilt.

Another very interesting run was one round by Esternay and the three villages in which the party worked before they moved from Esternay to Fêre Champenoise. I was over the ground a few days later, taking two of the men who had been out from the beginning round for a holiday to see the houses they had helped to make and the people living in them. This previous time I had with me Livock, the head of the Fêre Champenoise party and Harvey, the Commandant of the whole work. One of the objects of the journey was to finish off some business, and another was to put a cross on a German grave. Esternay was one of the places where the fighting was hardest, just at the turning point when the German advance was stopped. One of the German officers killed there was Count von Moltke, son of the German Commander in Chief, and grandson of the von Moltke who won the Franco Prussian war in 1870. He was buried there with another officer, and at the suggestion of the French Commander at Esternay one of our men made a cross to put on the grave. It was this cross that we took over that day, and after showing it to the Commander at Esternay we took it to the grave and put it up. It is inscribed: Ici reposent le Comt von Moltke et un autre officier allemand inconnu: Here rest the Count von Moltke and another German officer unknown.

It was very nice to see the people in the houses we had built them (I say we because I was at Jordans when they were done). One or two of the families seemed particularly nice people, and they were very grateful. We are beginning to get people into our houses here now. Most of the building jobs are finished or nearly finished and two or three of the houses are inhabited. We expect to leave Fêre Champenoise within the next fortnight, and move further east.

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I don't know yet exactly where I shall be, but we are going to divide up into several smaller groups, each working in one of several villages quite near each other between Vitry and Sermaize, with a central headquarters for the architects, organising secretary, etc. I shall presumably be attached to one of the groups or to the headquarters with my car.

I took three of the architects round these villages some time ago on a two day tour of exploration to find out what was to be done. I got my first sight then of Sermaize, where we have a party working now. It's certainly the worst piece of Destruction I've seen so far. It's on a bigger scale than the villages; quite a little town, and absolutely razed to the ground; and it was done deliberately. The Mayor was away with the army when the Germans arrived; the deputy mayor also was away, and there was no one to give a guarantee of good behaviour on behalf of the people, so the whole place was burnt.

The Destruction there and in the villages round is something more complete than here. There are fewer walls standing, and we shall be putting up wooden houses almost entirely.

I had a letter from Aunt Rachel yesterday, and one from Mr Jones a few days ago.

Remember me to everybody.

With very much love to you and Hilda, and all loving birthday wishes.

Bernard

I was glad to have Hildebrand's letter the other day.

Chalons-sur-Marne

15th April 1915

My dear Auntie

I am here at Chalons for a few days taking the place of the Chalons chauffeur who is in Paris getting his car repaired. At the present moment I am sitting in the sun in the garden, having a morning free and having put my car into a garage to get its accumulators charged.

I am sorry my last letter took so long to reach you. Letters seem to be coming through very well

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from England; your last one only took two days from Manchester to Fête Champenoise. The other way they seem very slow. Here at Chalons, which is the headquarters of the French army, I'm told that they hold all the letters up for a few days to make sure that the news will be stale. So I shall probably wait to post this at Fête Champenoise, unless I can send it to Paris.

I told you in my last letter – which, alas, I see was three weeks ago, that we should be moving on from Fête Champenoise. Most of the men have gone and the removal will be finished in a few days. But we are leaving a doctor there with Miss Denham as nurse, and me as Chauffeur; so I expect to be there for another month at any rate. We have taken an empty house where we shall live, and where we have two rooms which will be used if necessary as a hospital. The doctor has got quite a big practice in the town and the villages for a dozen miles or so round, and there have been one or two cases which he would have liked to fetch in for nursing; and there are no doctors handy except a not very good and (I think) not fully qualified one in Fête Champenoise, and he has no car.

So we three, the doctor, Miss D. and I, will form the Fête Champenoise équipe. (Equipe is a word you may as well know, as we always use it. You pronounce it ay-keep, and it means one of our parties; but it sounds more important if you give it a French name.) The doctor at present has gone home ill, but we shall have another in a day or two.

16th April Fête Champenoise. The above, as far as I am concerned, became untrue an hour or two after I wrote it. The authorities, as their custom is, have changed their plan, and another car is to come here while I go east to a small équipe which is to open up work in the Department of the Meuse; that is to say in what we should call the next county in England, or perhaps province would be a better word. I go as far as Derraise tomorrow, where I shall get further particulars, and unless certain members of the committee who weren't consulted and don't like having their plans upset (wherein I agree with them!) get the plan altered back again, I shall go on as soon as possible to the Meuse. The équipe is to be quite a small one at present, to get both building and relief work started on a small scale until some of the other work is finished and we can enlarge it; and I, somewhat against my will, am to be head of it; at the same time I shall be chauffeur to the relief workers.

Until I send another address, letters had better be addressed
Mission de la Societé des Amis

BERNARD IRELAND MACALPINE A MEMOIRE OF 1914 - 19

Vitry-le-Francois

Marne, France.

Vitry is the place to which letters get out most quickly, they can be sent on from there.

There has been a good deal of moving of troops lately. Two Sundays ago Fêre Champenoise was invaded by 4,000 of them, some of whom had been at the front for months. They swarmed all over the place; we had six of them feeding in our kitchen. We understood they were to be here for a week's rest, but most of them were off early next morning. The villages round were full of them too, including the burned ones, and 40 were quartered in a house and stable which we built at Lenharrée for three people, one horse, and one cow. In the same village, a lot of horses were tethered to a cart shed we had built, and nearly pulled it down.

I ran out to Vassimont, one of these villages, the day after we were invaded, and fetched in a soldier with rheumatism to the little hospital here run by the sisters. It was evening when we went for him, and he was lying on straw in the cowshed, so we were glad to get him in. The next day we had another call to the same village. A boy had picked up the end of a German shell – the part where the time fuse is – and had thrown it down on the railway line at a crossing. It had exploded and made a nasty wound on his hand, which is still being dressed every other day.

I've done quite a lot lately in the way of taking people to hospital. I've taken three maimed cases from this district to Chalons to our hospital there – one of the accompanied by a family, four small children for the crèche – and one case to the ordinary hospital there, a man with sciatica who liked the car because it was softer than his bed.

About ten days ago, we lost our doctor. Sent home ill, and our Chalons hospital lost its chauffeur, who had taken his car to Paris for a repair; so I had first of all to get the lady doctor from Chalons and take her a round of some of our patients and then go to Chalons for some days and work for them. The work consisted in taking women home – these didn't happen to be able to bring in by car. The hospital was full, with 30 patients, and I forget how many babies, and how many children in the crèche. I took these in from home, all of them in the areas for which special permits have to be got, as they are between Chalons and the front. It was quite an interesting time for a change.

In the middle of it I had a very busy time last Sunday. On Saturday night we got a wire from Fêre Champenoise, wanting the car to take a typhoid case to Vitry and the doctor to see an accident.

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So we got off early in the morning, got here before they had finished breakfast, and ran out to the village where the accident was. A tree had blown over and damaged a man; probably a broken rib, one of our party reported who had happened to pass through the village. But when the doctor saw him in the morning he was looking very bad, and she promptly diagnosed it as a fractured base of the skull. His bed was in a stable full of horses, so she thought it best to try to get him to hospital. So we got him on to a stretcher we had taken with us – not a very easy job with a heavy fat man and very little room – got the stretcher on the car across the backs of the seats, and took him to hospital at Versus, about 10 miles away. We hear today, however, that he died a few hours later.

After leaving him there we came back here, picked up the typhoid patient, a small boy, and took him to Vitry to the civil hospital there – one of the kind of French hospitals which much disgust our doctors; then on to Semaize, where there was supposed to be a patient needing the doctor. However, this one had been dealt with.

Coming home I had my first trouble with my tyres, and was held up on the road for the first time with this car; not bad for 3000 miles. I had had two previous punctures but both happened conveniently at our front door here. But this time it was a burst and happened after dark, landing us late at Vitry; so we stayed there overnight, and went on to Chalons next morning, having another puncture on the way.

I enclose rent note from Mr. Walsh, which was sent on to me here.

Since I wrote last I have had four letters from you, one enclosing a dividend warrant. The last was written on the 11th, and came through in two days. I was sorry to hear of Mrs Armstrong's death and Mrs Lloyd's.

Don't send on the International Review of Missions. I get little enough of it read when I'm at home.

You are right about Mr. Hilditch being paid for the work at the Fynney estate. Hilda is also right about our holidays: or at any rate they have started giving a fortnight's holiday and those who have been out all the time, and intend to do it repeatedly, so that everyone will get it about at the end of five months.

If Plato is still with you, tell him I got his two letters, and the little dictionary; also that I am sorry to

BERNARD IRELAND MACALPINE
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have been such a bad correspondent, but that he has fared better than the rest of my friends, in that he has had a postcard.

I was interested to hear in Hilda's letter of the new arrival at Accrington. I had a p.c. From Hilda from Keswick. Give her my love.

Very much love to yourself

B.

Mission Anglaise
Hotel de la Source
Sermaize
Marne, France
20th April 1915

My dear Auntie,

Letters had better come to above address until I send the new one when we get going in the new place.

I came over here on Saturday. This is the place where I expected to come when I came out first. Sermaize itself was a little manufacturing town, which is altogether destroyed, and the Hotel de la Source used to be quite a well-known place where people came to drink the waters: there is a spring here of some kind of mineral water. The place failed a few years ago, and since the town was destroyed has been crammed full of the inhabitants. We have part of the Casino for feeding and living rooms and offices, and have put up two four-roomed wooden houses, one for the men and one for the women. I am writing in the men's hut, which stands up the hill above the hotel, just on the edge of the wood; behind us there are miles and miles of forest, which will be very pretty in a week or two. The flowers are coming out in it, plenty of oxlips and violets, and soon there will be

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lots of lily of the valley in flower.

There are nearly 30 people here at present, most of the men putting up the wooden houses in Sermaize, and the women doing relief work here and in the villages round. There are one or two busy with agriculture relief. Seeds and implements have been given out, and a garden is being started which will employ a little local labour and provide vegetables and seeds for distribution elsewhere if we move further east and north later in the summer or autumn.

I had a look yesterday at the building work here. The houses' frames come out here in sections by train from our workshops at Vitry, and are carted to the sites in wagons lent by the military authorities; then they are put up and boarded by our men with the help of some of the soldiers.

Then I had a run out to Nettancourt, the village where the new équipe is to be, for a case to be taken to hospital. It was a boy with diphtheria, thirteen years old, living in a wretched little house with his parents, grandmother and another child. They are refugees from some part occupied by the Germans. There was very little furniture and they were sleeping on straw. The boy had been ill for a fortnight. We got him in to hospital at Bar le Duc, and heard today that they performed tracheotomy last night and the boy is doing well. So possibly we may have saved his life; certainly we were none too soon.

Bar-le-Duc is the capital of the Department of the Meuse, and the base at present of the third army. It's a picturesque old town, partly down on the banks of the river and partly upon the hill above. We have two ladies there at present helping a French doctor at a dispensary for refugees.

Today I have been taking round Miss Cashmore, who has been in charge of relief work here and is returning to England, and Miss Fry, sister of the secretary of the Committee in England, who has just come out to take the work over. We went over to Bar le Duc, then to Nettancourt and several of the villages round.

Nettancourt, where I am to be, is not destroyed at all, but is quite near to the village where we hope to build first. There's nowhere for us to live there as it is entirely destroyed. We have got quarters at a lovely old farm house belonging to the Mayor of the village. We shall have a workshop in the village, and make the houses there. The arrangements for the workshop are not quite settled yet, but that should be done in a day or two, and then we shall start work as soon as possible.

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Meanwhile, one of the relief workers, Miss Jowitt, is out there visiting for the relief work.

21st April I'm going to send this to Paris by two of our people who are on the way home. I'm taking them in as far as Vitry, where I shall see about arrangements for the new place.

We have been having the most lovely weather for the last few days, hot and sunny. Sermaize will be very hot in the summer.

Much love, B.

Société des Amis

Nettancourt

Meuse, France

7th April (sic) 1915

Dear Mr. Hilditch

I am sorry to find your letter of 24th April has been lying here unanswered for some days.

I return cheque herewith.

Yours faithfully

B.I.Macalpine.

P.S. The Paris address is perhaps still the best for writing me.

Société des Amis

Nettancourt

Meuse, France

7th May 1915

BERNARD IRELAND MACALPINE
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Dear Mr. Knott,

I am sorry there has been so much delay in answering your letter of 14th April, which Miss Ireland forwarded to me.

I am glad to hear of the suggestion for adding to Mr. Robert's insurance and shall be very pleased to give £10 towards it. I enclose a cheque at once to save further trouble.

I am out here with a party starting a new piece of work, in the Department of the Meuse. Nettancourt lies a little to the south of Saint Meushould. We are busy making wooden houses for the burned villages, giving relief etc.

Excuse more.

Yours sincerely,

B.I.Macalpine.

Société des Amis

Nettancourt,

Meuse, France

23rd May 1915

My dear Auntie,

I'm afraid my correspondence is getting in an appalling state. I begin all my letters by saying I'm sorry no to have written for so long, and here I am with a month gone since my last letter.

However, I really think it's not my fault this time, though I might have sent a few more postcards, instead of waiting every day in the hope of writing the next; but for the time being I've been doing a full chauffeur's work, plus that of the head of an équipe which is rather too much. I hope we shall have our second car going this week, and then I shall have time to do some of the things I ought to do. I came out a week ago driven by a Free Church camper of the name of Black, but has had to go to Vitry, for a repair; we hope to have it back tomorrow.

Mon morning Some people going in to Vitry, so I'm going to get this off in a hurry and get it posted there. I was interrupted yesterday.

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We are having most lovely weather and very hot. What it will be like in July and August I don't know. Thanks for my tent Which Black brought out. Three of us slept out last night, outside it and used the tent to put our clothes in.

I daresay Mr. Knott will have told you that I replied to him about Mr. Roberts's present, and sent ten pounds.

Things are going fairly well here. Our building squad is rather small but is getting ahead. Then we have the doctor and his wife, the latter being housekeeper, nurse, and our two ladies on relief work. The place is very nice, and the country round beautiful. Now I must close, and hope to start again soon.

Much love

B.

Nettancourt

Mon.mg.

Dear Wetherall,

Black has had another burst like his other one; and has now only four tubes – no spare, and none in the Stephey. Can you by any possible, get him a couple in Vitry today, and send them out to him? If not, I take it there is no objection under the circumstances to our party getting them in Bar tomorrow if we can. Tyres 815 – 10's

Sorry to bother you

B.I.Macalpine

Société des Amis

Nettancourt, Meuse,

France

14th June 1915

My dear Auntie

BERNARD IRELAND MACALPINE A MEMOIRE OF 1914 - 19

I've got a pile of your letters, ranging from April 27th to June 7th, so, as some of them haven't been answered I'll look through them to see if there's anything to answer in them. I think I've read them through all right.

I was sorry to hear you had been poorly and been having trouble with Lizzie. That and the war would make it very trying for you I'm afraid, but I hope you are better now, and have had a good holiday with the Joneses. I am sorry not to have written to Mr. Jones, but, the fact of the matter is that I haven't written to anyone except you and on business. Perhaps I may get something written to him someday; but I never seem to have much time, and in the last week or so what with hot weather and hay fever, I have been a little overtired. However, I'm waking up again now.

I'm sorry you were poorly to go to hear Whitlow where he was in Manchester. You would have found him very interesting I think. I met him first the weekend I was at Saffron Walden School (the time I cut my head open in the swimming bath), where he was a master. He has been out here as our agent in Paris, and was over at home for his holiday. He did a lot of talking at meetings in the fortnight, and got over £200 for the funds.

I was sorry to hear about the anti-German riots and Plato's being interned. I hope he will be a little better off than he was at Newbury.

June 15th I am just back from a car round with the doctor. The weather is still lovely, and not quite so hot as it was, and the country is looking beautiful. We are in a beautiful part. It is much more like English country than when we were further east, and reminds me sometimes of Gloucestershire, sometimes of a bit of Oxfordshire, and there are one or two bits a little like the country as you approach the Lake District **District** from the south. Some of the colouring we have had has been wonderful, especially the grass earlier in the spring. I remember specially on evening when we were up at Sommeille., the village a couple of miles away, where we are building; we were looking over the sites for the houses. Looking away to the north we saw the beginning of the Augorne? Forests, with almost every shade of soft green, and other greens in the meadows between. It would have been hard to find anything more peaceful. While we were looking, the villagers pointed out five little puffs of white cloud in the sky over the woods. They looked just like the other clouds, but they were the puffs from exploding shells fired at an aeroplane. It was too far away to hear the shots or see the aeroplane, but the villagers had seen the puffs of smoke before, and knew what they were.

BERNARD IRELAND MACALPINE
A MEMOIRE OF 1914 - 19

I don't know at all when I shall come home for a holiday. I'm entitled to one anytime now, but I don't want to leave at present. I want to see the work further on here, and I'd just as soon get more of the hot weather over before I have a break. All the same, I shall be glad to have a look at home again. I was sorry to hear about Leonard being gassed. He was lucky in getting off so lightly.

Now I must close again so as to have this ready for the doctor, who is going in to Paris early tomorrow morning and will post this there.

Very much love

B.

P.S. I'm seeing the Manchester Guardian pretty regularly now, as the doctor gets it sent. I was sorry to see Jack Warmesley's dead. Will you give them my sympathy if you see any of them?

Société des Amis
Nettancourt, Meuse,
France
17th June 1915

My dear Auntie,

I don't think you know that I have got a camera out here with me. I only got it at the last minute in London before I came out. We had rather been given to understand at Jordans that cameras would not be allowed, but I heard that there were one or two out here, so I got a little Vest Pocket Kodak in London just before leaving; and I have taken quite a lot of photos. Incidentally, I have started quite a fashion for Vest Pocket Kodaks. I send the films in to Paris to be developed and printed, which takes rather a long time, and I have waited until I have the prints sorted out before sending you them. I have got over a hundred, and am expecting another big batch from Paris in a week or two. I'll send them to you a few at a time; they might be opened or delayed if I sent a whole lot at once.

I enclose a first batch; the numbers correspond to those I have given them for the purpose of taking orders from people out here, wherein I bid fair to do quite a trade. So if you want to ask questions about them, all you need to do is to mention the number.

BERNARD IRELAND MACALPINE A MEMOIRE OF 1914 - 19

No.2001 shows where we live. The house is typical of a lot of the big farms houses here. It's really a double house. M. Choux, the farmer, lives in the one on the left of the archway, and that on the right's his father in laws'. He has been away since the Germans were here, and is staying away as he doesn't like the sound of the guns. We have got his house. They are good houses, with a lot of fine old furniture in them. The open window to the left of the archway is the window of our dining room. The one next to it is at present in use as a bedroom, though in theory we keep it as a second sitting room. At the back , overlooking the farmyard, are the kitchen, and a room which Trew (our architect) and I use as our office. The upstairs of the two houses consists mainly of big lofts – great places they would be for playing hide and seek – full of many things, grain, hens, ?, and many sundry small bedrooms opening off them. Two of the bedroom windows you can see in the picture of our house. They are used by our ladies, and the loft behind serves as a store for the clothes they give away.

June 19 Glad to have your letter of the 14th. I am sending you a wire to give my love to Plato, in case he get's off to Germany before he can get a letter from me. I had no idea there was any chance of his getting away now.

Glad to see from the Guardian that Fred Turner's wound is not serious. I had wondered several times if he had been sent to the Dardenelles. Remember me to the Turners when you see them.

Photo No. 2002 shows the framework of our first wooden house being carted from the workshop to Sommeilles. We have a barn in Nettancourt where the frames are made for Sommeilles, the village two miles away, where we are building, and for Villiers-aux-verts, another village about five miles away, where another équipe has just been started for building. The workshop is in charge of one of our men – a Watts from Manchester – with three or four soldiers, supplied by the army, under him.

No. 2003 shows my car on its way home from a shopping expedition. In the front is Miss Connah, who till a few days ago was doing relief work; and Mrs. Morland, the doctor's wife and our housekeeper, is peeping over the luggage at the back.

Now I must stop. I suppose you will be at home when this reaches you. Remember me to the Joneses when you write.

BERNARD IRELAND MACALPINE
A MEMOIRE OF 1914 - 19

Love to Hilda and much to yourself

B.

Mission de la Societé des Amis

Nettancourt, Meuse,

France

20th June 1915

My dear Plato,

I hope you haven't thought I have been forgetting you because I haven't written. You have been often in my mind, and I have wondered how you were getting on and what you were doing; especially when the news came of the anti-German riots and the re-interning of the Germans in England. It is terrible, the way things are getting embittered as the war goes on. It will take a long time to get rid of the bitterness; but perhaps you and your friend in England will be able to do their little bit. Anyway, we shall still be friends, and we must try.

We sometimes wonder out here at the comparative absence of bitterness among those who have suffered most. Bitterness of course there is: I needn't tell you that "les Prussiers" **Prissiens** are not popular in the devastated districts. But there isn't that venomous bitterness that you get in some of the people and newspapers at home. They tell you of their losses, and they tell you of the terrible things that will make future friendship difficult. But they tell you too of the other side, and always ready to acknowledge the cases of kindness and generous action on the part of the invaders. This village is unhurt, apart from its church on the hill above it; and I'm sitting at my bedroom window in a fine old French farmhouse, looking out over the field to the houses and the trees beyond – and there's nothing to suggest anything different from a quiet Sunday in the country at home. The village was spared by the German commander, who who **duplicate** had orders to burn it, in response to the appeals of the Maire, who had been his host while the Germans were here.

You will be interested, I think, in the enclosed photograph. You may remember that at the turning point of the battle of the Marne One of the German officers who fell was a Count von Moltke, son of the Commander in Chief: his grave is near Esternay, where our people began their building work before I came out. The photograph is one I took of the grave; and the cross on it I helped to put up. It was made by one of our men, at the suggestions of the French officer in charge at Esternay,

BERNARD IRELAND MACALPINE
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and I took the President, T.E.Harvey MP over to put it up.

And now I hear you are hoping to get home to Germany. I had no idea it would be possible for you now. In a way, I am sorry you should be going, as it may mean I shan't see you for a long time. But it will be good for you to get back home and see your people. I hope you will find them as well as may be in the circumstances. It has been a trying time for you in an enemy country; and England can never, I fear, be quite the same to you. But I hope the time will come, and not be so very long in coming, when you will be able to come back freely and see us.

Meantime my best love; I hope this may reach you before you leave.

Yours ever,

B.I.Macalpine.

Société des Amis
Nettancourt, Meuse,
France
20th June 1915

My dear Auntie,

I am spending part of a quiet Sunday morning writing at my bedroom window. I have just written a letter to Plato, on the chance of it reaching him before he leaves.

I sent off a letter to you yesterday to be posted in Vitry; I have to go into Vitry myself this afternoon, and may not post this then. We are having now a monthly reunion on a Sunday of all the men of the expedition at one or other of the places where we are working.

To-day we and the ladies as well, are meeting at Huiron, one of two villages near Vitry Where building has been going on. The work there is practically finished, and we shall have a look at it before the men move on to Sermaize to help in the building there. These two villages, Huiron and Elannes, are the only two places which I haven't seen, where we are working, so I shall be glad to have a look at them.

BERNARD IRELAND MACALPINE A MEMOIRE OF 1914 - 19

Perhaps an account of yesterday's work will give you a fair idea of my work here as it happened to be a fairly full day and to include a bit of most sides of our work here. It started at five in the morning, which is (nominally) when the builders get up and take a cup of tea before going out to Sommeville to build. Black and I take week about for getting up to take them out. This plan gives them a longer rest in the middle of the day, when it is so hot. After taking them out – two journeys, as our we have now four men building and two of our soldiers helping them – I ran the doctor out to disinfect a house at Charmont. This is a village about four miles west of here, where the doctor and nurse have a lot of work. A week or two ago we were running nurse out nearly every day. And she was sometimes there three hours or so. This particular house was one of the dirtiest ever seen, with half a dozen children – some of the many that swarm about the car when I'm waiting there, and demand, and occasionally get, a ride around the village. The first patient there was one of twin girls, and the doctor was not quite sure that it wasn't typhoid. Then the mother took ill, and we took her in to Sermaize to the little wooden hospital we have put up there, taking her baby with her. She too has almost had typhoid, and now the baby has developed what may be smallpox. So two days ago the ladies went out with Black and turned the house inside out, got it scrubbed, and burnt all sorts of unclean things; and yesterday morning the doctor and I turned the children out at half past six and put a couple of brimstone lamps in, leaving the place to be opened later in the morning. We hope to get the mother back on Tuesday. Meanwhile her place is taken by René, the eldest girl, aged about twelve, assisted by the baker's wife opposite, who sees that they don't starve.

After breakfast, which we have at half past six (the builders have theirs out at Sommeville), I took Mrs. Morland and nurse in to bar le Duc for a morning's shopping, leaving the other car to see to getting the builders in for lunch. In the afternoon I took nurse out to St. Mard, out not from here, another village which is nearly as bad as Charmont was for invalids, and where you can't get away for new patients wanting to see the doctor or nurse. This time, however, we only went to two or three: one of them a little boy with a cut leg – in a family of refugees from further north, a mother and two or three children living in a bare room, with a tiny bedroom off it, where like so many others that we see, they sleep on straw.

From St. Mard we ran on to Sommeilles, our building village, picked up Miss Jowitt and a Mr. Gower, an Australian Quaker who had been here for a few weeks, and went on to various other villages. Lakes ...Villotte (from their ... car into hospital at bar le Duc .. about another ...) ...

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home, doing a few relief ... visits.

June 23rd Glad to ...letter today. I wonder if you are still in ... Kington. If so, my love to the Joneses.

Just finishing off to send it from Vitry tomorrow, when I go in to Committee.

Very much love.

Bernard.

Société des Amis

Nettancourt, Meuse,

France

24th June 1915

My dear Auntie,

I got you letter of the 20th yesterday, as I mentioned at the end of mine.

I don't know about a holiday; it is quite likely I may not come till the end of August.

My hayfever is passing, and hasn't bothered me for the last few days; though that may be partly due to the weather, as we have had some rain. Yesterday we had a number of thunder showers, very heavy and very local; at one side of the village it was very wet, and at the same time the roads on the other side were quite dry.

June 25th I wrote the above yesterday morning sitting in the car at Chaumont waiting for nurse and surrounded by children of the village – in particular the family whose house we disinfected the other day – asking for a ride and then trying English with the aid of my letter. Now I'm on another round with nurse, and waiting for her at the moment at St. Mard.

We've just come from Bettancourt where we have deposited a bed for a patient, an old lady who was sleeping on a mattress on the floor. They are refugees from further north – she and her daughter and family. The daughter's family fled south to where the old lady lived, hoping to be safe there, but they had to flee again on foot across the fields, with no chance of taking anything with them; so that all their furniture is borrowed. They have two rooms, one so narrow that we could scarcely put the bed up in it; and there are seven people living there; the old lady, her daughter and

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the daughter's husband (who is reformé, that is to say excused military service for medical reasons) and four children. The old lady's son is a prisoner with the Germans, and apparently she spent the night weeping for him; the doctor wanted her to have a bed, so we loaded one on to the car – I had four of them on a once the other day, iron double beds with folding ends, and four mattresses – and took it to her, much to her surprise.

Bettancourt is a place about half a dozen miles from Nettancourt. There is a château there, and the lady who owns it has given us permission to use it for a convalescent home.

I don't know whether the name of E.V.Lucas, the author. (sic) His wife has had several thousand pounds given her privately to be spent on the French peasants who have suffered through the war, more especially the agricultural people. They went to the British every day in Paris to enquire about openings, and were told by one of the secretaries there that the people who were doing that kind of thing best were the Society of Friends. So they came along to see our work. They were interested in the new scheme for a convalescent home at Bettancourt, and have undertaken to finance and run it in cooperation with us. They are themselves coming this in it (sic) tomorrow, and the nurse superintendent arrives tomorrow too. Dr. Morland, our doctor here, will be the medical officer for it, in addition to the very large practice he has now got in the villages within a dozen miles from here and the work of the little wooden hospital at Sennay.

I haven't told you yet, I think, about the new hospital work at Chalons. The work there of the maternity hospital has been slackening off, the war having gone on so long that the supply of maternity cases is falling off, and there was some thought of giving up the hospital. But new work has turned up from Rheims, which, as you know, is being constantly bombarded. There is a civil hospital there, containing a good many women and children, many of these wounded in the bombardment. When the town ceases to be bombarded, the hospital will be wanted for the military; and while the bombardment lasts it is naturally not the best place for people to recover in, with the constant possibility of shells falling on the hospital and injuring it or setting it on fire, with the noise of the bombardment disturbing them every day; they spend quite a bit of their time under the beds. So the plan is to evacuate the hospital and bring the patients along to Chalons. Our people there are setting aside one of their two wards for them, and keeping the other one as a maternity ward. They have already got a few boys over from Rheims. The poor things were frightened out of their lives not long ago, when there was an aeroplane attack on Chalons and bombs fell quite near the hospital there

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The medical work is taking up quite a lot of the time of both our cars. The round with nurse this afternoon, on which today's portion of this letter was begun, was over thirty miles long and took five hours, and the doctor had a car going most of the day. It's quite possible that we shall have a second nurse here before long. In fact, the doctor needs a car entirely to himself now, and we are hoping to get some third car for part of the time, until we can get a lorry which will take over the building part of the car work. The Lucases are getting one for us, in addition to finding a car for the work at Bettancourt.

I've told you of one or two of the cases I have taken to hospital from here; the boy with diphtheria, and the woman who went to our hospital at Sennay. On Tuesday, I took her back to her home at Charmont, which she is getting nice and dirty again. Then I picked up an old lady with a dislocated shoulder and took her off to Chalons to hospital to have it put right. She had had it dislocated for five days before she showed it to the doctor and he couldn't get it back without chloroform, so sent her off to hospital. Charmont being in the Department of the Marne, not in the Meuse - we're only a mile or two from the border here - she had to go to Chalons, a run of about 25 miles each way. I picked her up about noon, and had her back home by half past four with the shoulder right again. She's the second dislocate shoulder I've taken to hospital recently; the other was a man in Bettancourt, whom I ran in to Bar le Duc one evening.

I just mentioned to you an old lady I took to hospital from Villette. She is 78 years old, I think, and is the wife of a woodman who is 82. He fought in the Crimean war, and showed me a sabre cut he had in the neck. He didn't want to go into hospital, so he tied it up tightly himself and went on fighting; with the result that he was invalided out of the army a little later. He remarked on the fact then France and England were fighting together, but against Russia instead of as her ally.

The woman was the man's second wife, and when he married her he had divided what he had among his first wife's children, with the exception of his house. That is now burned, leaving him with nothing. They have been living through the winter in a little wood and mud hut in the woods, where he used to keep his tools, and on wet nights the rain would come through on their faces. I took Miss Jowitt over to arrange about taking the woman to hospital, and then we ran on to the French doctor whose patient she was supposed to be, who lives two or three villages away, and asked for a certificate to take her to hospital. Whereat he asked what was the matter with her! Miss Jowitt said dropsy, and heart disease, and he meekly made out the certificate. Then two days

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later we went to take her to hospital. To get to the hut you go along a rough cinder path for about three quarters of a mile in the forest. Then, to avoid having to carry the patient, I attempted to back the car up a very rough bit of track with deep ruts axle deep, and stuck. After trying for some time amid a perfect swarm of tiny flies to get the car out with the aid of my own jacks and a rickety apology for a spade, I got the assistance of four of the workmen. They brought their implements along, dug out around the back axle, got a plank under the hub; then one of them calmly and neatly cut down a tree, cut it in two, and so provided levers with which they lifted the car up bodily and got it out. And so we got off the old lady to hospital, leaving the old man to live alone in his hut in the woods. I saw him again the other day, and found him rather aggrieved at the amount they are making him pay for his wife at the hospital, and much disappointed that he hadn't yet got a pair of trousers Miss Jowitt had promised him.

July 26 I'm sending you a few more photographs, this time of Sommeilles. Sommeilles is the village in which we are building, and is practically entirely destroyed. The population before the war was about four hundred, and there are not more than about half a dozen houses standing. When we started work there were 41 people in the village; now we have got six of our little wooden houses inhabited, and that makes 20 more people living in the villages. They are nearly all farmers farming their own land, and they have been living in the neighbouring villages – most of them in Nettancourt – and have to walk out to Sommeilles and back to cultivate their fields and gardens. From Nettancourt that makes rather more than a two mile walk each way, which makes it very hard, especially when so many of them are old women and the men are all away at the war. Miss Jowitt met one of them the other day at Noyers, a village close by here, an old dame of over 70 who had walked to Sommeilles before four o'clock in the morning, worked in her garden all day, and gone back about nine at night. I fancy she is one of those we are building for.

June 27 The people at Sommeilles were there during the battle, not having had early warning to enable them to get away. I don't think there was a great deal of fighting actually in the village itself, though there was a certain amount. I think it was the adjoint (the deputy mayor) of the village who told Miss Jowitt about how he got the people together in a low part for safety, and then a French wounded soldier came along towards them, and they tried to beckon him off for fear of drawing the German fire onto the group of women and children; but he came over to them, so they sent the women and children to hide in the asparagus beds, and then the adjoint helped a German doctor to bandage up the Frenchman's wound, with all the children peeping out of the asparagus beds to watch.

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There's a horrible story of a cellar in which they found a woman and children killed and mutilated, which I am afraid is true. On the other hand there seem to have been instances of very decent treatment of the people. The German priest wanted to celebrate mass in the church and went for the key to the young girl who acted **acted as** the sacristan; she was afraid to go with him but he treated **treated** her very nicely and invited her to come to mass, promising **promising** that she would get no harm.

The officer in command of the German forces stayed at the Maire's house here while they were here. I think it must have been the Maire's wife who tackled him about the murdered woman at Sommeilles, presumably to investigate; anyway, he came back looking very upset. I suppose it was the same officer who had orders to burn Nettancourt, but spared it when the Maire pleaded with him, saying he had been the Maire's guest and would arrange what he wished. Hence our nice farm house to live in, and a village uninjured except for the church on the hill above it, which had its tower knocked off by the French and its destruction finished by the Germans.

Photo No. 2001 shows the church at Sommeilles, a view **view** taken from the first house we started. The church tower is badly damaged, the bells lying about underneath, and the outer roof is gone. It was set on fire deliberately, like the rest of the village. But inside it has escaped, and, except for the smashed town, looks practically undamaged.

No. 2202 shows the Mairie (town hall) opposite **opposite** the church.

No. 2203 shows some of the ruins, and No. 2204 a little garden belonging to the Curé in the middle of the ruins.

No. 2205 shows what was a farm house and yard belonging to the Adjoint. He and his wife are now living in one of the huts and the view in the picture to look at from one window and a most exquisite view over the country out of the other.

No.s 2006 and 2007 show the framework of the first house being put up. It will give you a pretty good idea of what the frames are like. They are made up in the workshop, taken out and erected, being bolted **bolted** together, and then boarded outside and in and a roof and floor, doors and windows put on. This one in the picture is a two roomed house.

No. 2208 shows the village watching the house go up. The lady in the sunbonnet is Miss Jowitt,

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and the man in uniform talking to her is Trew, our architect.

We are working directly under the Prefect of the Department of the Meuse, or more immediately under the Engineer of the Department to whom the Prefect has entrusted **entrusted** the work. He is doing some of the devastated villages himself, and we are doing others. Before we started we had a most interesting village meeting, held in the church, at which the engineer and Mr. Harvey and some of us were present. The engineer explained the terms on which the houses were to be had – the people pay a rent and later will buy them at a cost representing the cost of the materials, the labour of course being free – Mr. **H**arvey made a little speech; and the applications were taken for the houses. It was very quaint to see the little table with the Engineer's secretaries in front of the altar steps, all the village there sitting listening and then crowding round to give in their names and sign for the agreements, and the children prowling round enjoying the sight. Photo No. 2009 was taken outside the church after the meeting and shows the Engineer (in bowler hat), Mr. Harvey and Trew.

N0.2210 was also taken at the same time.

Now I must stop. This goes to Paris with one of the men on his way home.

Very much love.

B.

Nettancourt

Meuse

1st July 1915

Dear Bunting,

I send herewith my June accounts, leaving me a balance of 62.15 Fr. I have today paid Mrs. Morland another fr.300, and Trew another fr25, permanent advance, so that I am rally **really** at the moment down.

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Personal a/cs. Those who came out in tTFebruary did not settle up in Paris the 125fr. (or 75fr.) which they bought (?) from London. Trew and Haycock were among them, and their 125fr. Has lasted through. I have balanced up Trew's as per enclosed a/c, and have started him with a new 25fr. which will show in my July a/c. I was a little at a loss about Haycock's account, which is the best he can do, but he is quite certain tha **that** the 30fr. Sundries is under rather than over the mark.

Sunday's meeting. I understand that petits pains and butter are carried out from Vitry, Mr. Harvey wishes to provide fruit as usual; would you mind seeing to it at Vitry also?

Yours sincerely,

B.I.Macalpine.

Nettancourt

Meuse

1st July 1915

Dear Wetherall,

Jones will have mentioned to you the question of my holidays.

I should like to go about the 15th or 16th – i.e. for the last fortnight of July, getting back at the neginning **beginning** of August. I can probably settle exact dates when I see you next, but there will not be much different from what I have mentioned.

Black arranged with Harvey when he came out, for a special reason, to have a holiday of three weeks in England during Aug., i.e. sooner and longer than he is ordinarily entitled to, on the understanding that he won't want another for a considerable time. He wants, if possible, to set off from here on Aug. 3.

You suggested some time ago that my car might come in to Vitry when I took my holiday to have its

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cylinders done, etc. Can you manage that? The car will have done over 8,000 miles then. Also can you arrange a driver for it for the rest of my time away, **away** and a car here for any time that mine is laid up?

Yrs.

B.I.Macalpine.

P.S. There will of course also be the question of come **some** one to take Black;s place when he has gone.

Summary of Medical work in Nett. District May and June 1915

Village	May		June	
	Patients	Visits	Patients	Visits
Nettancourt	106	228	75	191
St. Mard	-	-	37	89
Charmont	29	74	24	62
Noyers	20	39	21	24
Laheycourt	13	20	22(?)	50
Maison du Val	13	20	14	23
Sommeilles	7	12	7	16
Louppy le Chateau	-	-	9	17
Bettancourt	-	-	8	11
Villers aux Verts	5	7	8	11
Maurupt	6	10	5	8
Heurtelise	6	9	-	-
Augécourt	-	-	3	4
Vroil	-	-	3	5
Varault le Dames	-	-	3	5
Houssignemont	1	1	-	-
Brabant le Roi	1	3	2	2
Heilz le Maurupt	1	1	2	3
Varsimont	-	-	2	3
Givry	-	-	2	4
Pougny aux Saulx	-	-	2	6

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Village	May		June	
	Patients	Visits	Patients	Visits
Jussicourt	-	-	1	1
Villotte	1	1	1	2
Dompremy	-	-	1	1
Possesse	-	-	1	1
Le Châtelieu	-	-	1	2
	213*	432	257	556

*Including 35 persons inoculated twice against typhoid and 9 vaccinated against smallpox.

(Following on the above.)

Sun. 4th July 1915

On the last two occasions I have presented the Committee with an incredibly dull statistical summary of the medical and nursing done from Nettancourt centre and I should like now to add a few details of a more interesting character. After a morning spent in a village, being fetched from

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house to house for hour after hour on account of maladies, some acute, some chronic, some severe, some apparently trivial, one comes away with a sense of bewilderment as to what it is best to choose to do and what leave undone, when the need seems as pressing to those concerned, who are for the most part quite unable to obtain any other medical help. And in choosing, one has endeavoured to give the first place to the more necessitous and especially the émigrés in whose case medical or nursing assistance to the head of the family may make all the difference to a family of children or dependents; and also to hygienic measures for the prevention of the spread of infection; and to spend time only when available on the less socially important maladies, or on the comparatively well-to-do who could in most cases help from a French doctor.

There has been so far no serious outbreak of infectious disease in the neighbourhood. On arriving at Nettancourt I found one case of unquestionable mild case of enteric fever in a child and another more doubtful one in an adult. We at once adopted careful measures of disinfection at home and encouraged the contacts to submit to prophylactic inspection, with the result that so far the cases have remained isolated ones. The vaccination **vaccination** became popular among the girls of Nettancourt and afterwards among the boys, who were not to be outdone in this adventure, with the result that nearly the whole juvenile population is now immune to the disease – and, let it be added sotto voce, by means of vaccine manufactures at Berne under the direction of Prof. Kolle, who is now responsible for the hygiene of Belgium.

A case from the neighbouring village of Charmont sent in to the little équipe hospital at Sermaize turned out to be paratyphoid of a mild type; and a short account of this patient's family may give a good idea of the varied nature of the work. It began with one of the twin girls of ten, for whom some powders were demanded on account of migraine; - all french girls have migraine, which may mean anything from a transient headache to a severe infectious ailment. The powders were supplied, and then the other twin sickened with a more protracted migraine, for which she had careful nursing at home and a supply of digestible food. The mother was rarely see as she wa **was** working all day in the fields and the household devolved chiefly on Renée, aged 12, who suffered herself in a milder degree. The strain gradually grew on the mother, who began to look more and more tired, and whom we induced, after several days at home to go to Sermaize for three or four days rest, her tiredness developing there, as noted, as a definite illness of the nature of paratyphoid. In order to induce Madame to leave home, Henry, aged 12 months, was allowed to accompany her, and while at Sermaize he developed an acute illness alarmingly like smallpox, in the elucidations of which one was glad of the kind help of the officer in charge of the Emergency

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Hospital at Bar-le-Duc, who chanced to pass. Fortunately, after affording an excuse for vaccinating a nurse who had not been done, the infant contented himself with multiple abscesses. While both were away, the house was cleaned, and a museum of rags was sorted over, with the help of a bonfire in the yard, of rats(?), who were very pressing in their assistance, and of a devoted band of workers in overalls; and finally, disinfected very early one morning with formalin lamps, the youthful family taking refuge at a neighbour's. Now another member of the party is endeavouring to stop up the rat-holes with broken glass and cement – a discouraging occupation as the bêtes, disappointed at one point of ingress, gnaw through another section of wainscoting.

Madame is now **reinstalled** chez soi with a refreshing **refreshing** ingratitude for all that has been done for her. She is no longer starved and neglected as **as** she was at Sermaize, and the baby disputes the rags with the rats and crows with delight instead of sobbing bitterly in a clean well equipped cradle.

At Chaumont too there has been an isolated case of scarlatina, which on notification prompted an enquiry from the mayor's secretary, in regard to precautions, as they were not in the habit of taking any.

At the present time there is a small epidemic of measles at Bettancourt. In the Meuse the public health authority shows some signs of life as the M.O.H came over to Nettancourt to disinfect a supposed case of diphtheria, and also supplied materials for dealing with the earlier case.

As far as concerns for our own staff, all those who had not received two profilactic typhoid injections at home have been given their second dose here, in no case with bad effects or sacrificing of a day's work.

Amicable with all Friends, colleagues working in the district have been carefully maintained. On the eastern limit Dr. Buvelot of Condé expressed his willingness for us to attend émigrés or others in the villages of the tow **two?** Louppys and Villotte, when he visits more or less regularly, and to cooperate when desirable. On the North west an elderly practitioner at Bussey-le-Repos met us when we were attending a case of his who had been bitten by the chien mechant belonging to our host at Nettancourt, and we were able to explain in his presence our wish that any fees payable should be received by him, while we **desire** in principle to attend the necessitous. On the South west Dr. Thiébaud, who left Heithy-le-Maurupt for Huity le Hutier when burned out of the

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former, has repeatedly left messages committing his patients to our care when we are the nearer. On the South Dr. Colson of Ruigny(?), expressed his willingness to leave us the practice at Nettancourt of which he was glad to wash his hands after a life-long acquaintance with the people. At the hospitals at various large centres relations have been frienal(?) friendly ? and easy. Many times patients have been sent to hospital in case of difficult diagnosis or severe injury, and have been at once admitted on our recommendation. To these poor people, saving them from the fatigues and misery of a long and complicated railway journey and assuring them transit up to the door of their asylum. Not a few cases of moderately severe injury have refused to leave home, and of two broken legs in Nettancourt, one is now convalescent and one after a fortnight, doing well.

Of special departments, we have tried to keep the old people, many of whom have lost their spectacles and all clue to the nature of the glasses, to replace these, and there is now fortunately a member of our staff with special experience who has volunteered for this work and is willing to help with an ophthalmic polyclinic whether collected at some centre or going round with his car.

Nettancourt,

Meuse, France

July 10th, 1915

Dear Mr. Goss,

I am coming home for a holiday next week and expect to pass through London on Saturday morning the 17th. If this letter reaches you in time, will you kindly put in hand a summer uniform for me, so that I can try it on on Saturday morning – jacket and traousers **trousers**, not knickers. I shall noyt **not** be in London except then and on my way out again, so I should be glad of the uniform while at home.

I will see you then about the boots and puttees which never reached me, and which Hardens denies all knowledge of.

One more thing. Miss Connah came out with an oilskin coat some 161/2 sizes too large. I have taken this over, as it fits me, and will pay you for it. Would you mind sending her out a new one of a size to fit over her coat of which of which I think you have the measure.

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I'm afraid this won't reach you much sooner than I do.

With kind regards

Yours sincerely

B.I.Macalpine.

P.S. Will you also provide me with a new service cap.

Nettancourt,

Meuse, France

11th June 1915

My dear Auntie,

I see my last letter to you was written longer ago than I realised, but you will have had my postcard telling you I am hoping to come **space** home this week. I hope to see you next Saturday evening, the 16th. I shall leave here on Thursday afternoon, cross on **F**riday night, reaching London on Saturday morning and Manchester, if all goes well, o **on** Saturday evening. I'm sorry if I shall find Hilda still away. I shall have a fortnight with you, and am going to steal a weekend, with Harvey's approval, to look in at Camp on my way from home to London. Whether I spend the fortnight at home in Manchester or somewhere away, I'm not particular.

I have your letter of the 4th and your pc of the 8th. Plato will be in Guernsey now, I suppose. I wish I could have seen him again before he went.

I will leave the Sunday School Union letter till I come home. I don't want either the Review of Missions or the Islanus(?) Review. Sorry I forgot to answer Hilda about the Automobile Association subscription she paid. As a matter of fact, I intended to drop it this year, but as I didn't say so, I'm afraid it is my fault.

No time for more if you are to get this before I come.

Much lovr **love**

B.

Manchester

25th June 1915

My dear Hilda,

BERNARD IRELAND MACALPINE A MEMOIRE OF 1914 - 19

Here I am at home. I came in Paris on Thursday week, crossed from Harvre to Southampton on Friday night and got here on Saturday night. We had a rough crossing in a stuffy cabin with about thirty soldiers, and the natural consequences happened. That route is the best now from the point of view of time, as on the Boulogne route you have to spend a day in Paris seeing about passports.

I am home for three weeks, as Harvey took it into his head that I was overworked and ordered me to stay an extra week. So I shall see you before I go back; though I shall probably be away when you come home on Friday, as I am going to spend a few days in Camp at Matlock. I go back to France tomorrow fortnight.

I had a very interesting two days the week before I left France, bringing patients in to the Chalons hospital. In addition to their maternity work, they are now taking some patients from the civil hospital at Rheims, to get them out of the way of the bombardment. The Chalons chauffeur had been on holiday, the had applied for permis for me, one to take a Rheims patientt patient home to a village up near the firing line in the Argonne, the other to bring a maternity case for Fîsmes, between Rheims and Soissons. As a matter of fact, the permis were so long in coming that the Challons chauffeur was back from his holiday, so that the result was that I went to Chalons to do his wrokwork and he came to Nettancourt to do mine.

On the Tuesday I went to Fîsmes, going through Rheims where we saw the matron of the Civil hospital and arranged to take away a couple of patients. Then the next day I ran out to Rheims, got the two patients, one of them a boy injured in the bombardment, and the other the girl to be taken home. She was a consumptive girl who had been in service in Rheims and was simply going spacehome to die. I ran her out to her home in the afternoon; a little village called Le Claon, north of Ste Menehould, and a few miles south of Four de Paris where there had been very heavy fighting a few days before. But those two days it was quiet where I was, both at Rheims and in the Argonne and we scarcely heard a gun fired.

Now I must stop. I began this on Sunday and it is now Wednesday. I'm off to camp this afternoon.

Your affec. Brother,

Bernard.

As from

Mission Anglaise

BERNARD IRELAND MACALPINE
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Nettancourt

Meuse.

27th July 1915

Dear Sirs,

I am sending you herewith 75 negatives (Vest Pocket Kodak).

Kindly print 30 prints of each on Velox as before, and send them to me, contre reimbursement at above address.

I have included a number of poor negatives. Will you kindly deal with these at your discretion, (a) intensify any which you think will be improved thereby, and (b) not printing any you think worthless.

Yours faithfully,

B.I.Macalpine.

Messrs. Kodak Ltd

Paris

Hôtel Britannique

Paris 10th Aug. 1915

My dear Auntie,

I've just got through this far fairly comfortably. I had a good journey from Manchester to London yesterday. The camp-crowd were there at Derby, so that I had company from there. I spent two and a half hours of the afternoon at the permit office waiting to get my passport visaed; did the other things I had to do, and spent the night at the West Central hotel. I left London this morning at ten o'clock for Folkestone, and crossed to Dieppe. Had a lovely crossing: perfectly calm and sunny: for which I am apparently to pay tonight by a very stuffy night. It was very muggy in London yesterday and seems to be the same here tonight.

We got to Dieppe about 5.30 and arrived in Paris about 8.30. I go on tomorrow probably by the 12 o'clock train. I wired you from Dieppe that I had arrived safely. I wonder if you will get the wire tonight.

I ran across Mrs. Ted Baines on St Pancras station. She had travelled up in the same train

BERNARD IRELAND MACALPINE A MEMOIRE OF 1914 - 19

from Bedford, where she had been to see Clifford.

Vitry - 11th Aug.

Came out here today. Now I hear that the Nettancourt équipe has been broken up. The building party, as I heard before I left, had already hived off to Sommeilles; and now the rest have had to clear out, as our quarters are required by the military. The doctor has gone to Sermaize. Where I'm to go I don't know yet. I am staying here overnight and shall see Harvey in the morning. I'll keep this open and let you know what's settled.

Aug.12

Going off to Bettancourt, to our convalescent home there, for the time being, to take over my car, which is there now, to be chauffeur and odd-job orderly. Later probably I go back to Brabant, when the Nettancourt équipe is likely to reform. But how long I shall be at Bettancourt I'm not sure.

Address letters for the time being to

Mission Anglaise

Bettancourt

Marne, France

Best love

B

Aug 12

excitement while I've been away.

1)hiving off of Sommeilles

2) trouble with R.O.M – sent home

3) 3) trouble with letters: Harvey called to Bau and shown indiscrete letters about movements of troops. We've got to be careful.

4) Departure of Black with his car, calmly left at Paris.

5) Turned out of Nettancourt. Notice given on Sunday, to be out on Wed. forenoon. Ste Menehoud under constant bombardment, by long range guns: according to the headquarters of the third army (now under General Humbert, replacing Savail who has gone to the Dardenelles) have been moved back to Nettancourt.

BERNARD IRELAND MACALPINE A MEMOIRE OF 1914 - 19

There have been very busy movements of troops about here lately, thousands of men coming here from up north, where they have been replaced by the new British forces. Heard nothing in England of the lengthening of the British lines: all I heard was at Southampton, on the way home, where I was told troops had been embarking in large numbers. Now I hear we are taking over as far as Aries, Soissons, or Rheims, according to three different versions, while Wwhitlow says we are lengthening our line to go miles.

Other military gossip on this side, mainly per Miss Connah, who got it in Paris.

1 A big push coming soon, and to be in the Belfort region.

2 The Ffrench have invented a huge new gun, so big that they have had utmost difficulty in finding means of transporting it and that when fired it almost buries itself! This meant for bombarding Metz.

3 Roumania and Bulgaria about to join the allies.

Tattens off home today to join the army; he tried the Ambulance Unit, but, by agreement with the British Red Cross, they are not taking any new men of military age, except those who are conscientious objectors.

Bettancourt

12 Aug. 1915

Dear Auntie,

I came out here this afternoon after posting my letter to you at Vitry.

Our party had to clear out of Nettancourt at three days' notice, all the place being wanted by the military. The two Wattses (from Manchester) managed to finish off in the workshop all the frames for the two villages (Sommeilles and Villers aux Verts), got them carted out, and have found a place at Brabant-le-Roi which will do for a smaller workshop for making the windows and doors. Meanwhile the doctor has gone to Sermaize.

We hope to be able to get sufficient accommodation in Bbrabant to get together again there, and in that case I shall go on there as soon as I can be relieved here. My car has been here for some time, but the man who has been driving it was waiting to go off. I hope they will be able to send another car in a few days, so that I can go on to Brabant.

BERNARD IRELAND MACALPINE
A MEMOIRE OF 1914 - 19

This place, the convalescent home was just beginning to get going when I came home. Now there are over thirty children here, a considerable number of whom are from Rheims. You will remember I told you we have got a château here, and that Mrs. E.V.Lucas is running the place. Mr. Lucas is in England at present. He had his own car here, but it got overturned in a ditch and is away for repairs.

Much love.

B.

Mission Anglaise

Brabant le Roi

Meuse

19th Aug. 1915

Sirs,

I enclose English cheque for £20 to cover what I owe you on your invoice of the 8th inst. and on account of further orders.

Yours truly

B.I.Macalpine

Messrs. Kodak

Paris.

Mission Anglaise

Brabant le Roi

Meuse

25th Aug. 1915

Dear Sirs,

I enclose two films, V.P.N; kindly print 20 prints of each Velox as usual.

I also send herewith four rolls of film. Kindly develop and print 20 copies of each successful print.

Please send by post to above address.

Yours truly

B.I.Macalpine.

BERNARD IRELAND MACALPINE
A MEMOIRE OF 1914 - 19

Messrs. Kodak.

Mission Anglaise

Brabant le Roi

Meuse, France

29th Aug. 1915

My dear Auntie,

I came on here rather more than a week ago from Bettancourt. We have got comfortable quarters here with some very nice people, a retired schoolmaster and his wife; we have a good sitting room and a couple of bedrooms. The only disadvantage is that we have to go through the room they live and sleep in to get to our sitting room. We are getting breakfast and dinner at the café across the road, merely having lunch here, which we get for ourselves.

At the moment there are only two of us; Watts, who is in charge of the workshop, where we have four soldiers working, and myself. The doctor and his chauffeur are still nominally here, but have been away most of the last few days, and both leave tomorrow for holidays. We are hoping to have another doctor here for most of September, but I don't think arrangements are completed. The doctor has his dispensary here space and one of the nutrses nurses is living at Laimont, about three miles towards Bar le Duc, and working the district from there; and three afternoons a week I am going in to Sermaize to take one of their nurses round in the car. We expect Trew, our architect, back from holiday in a day or two.

Sept 5 Best love. All well.

B.

Mission Anglaise

Brabant le Roi

Meuse, France

3rd Oct. 1915

My dear Auntie,

I'm glad to hear you had a visit from Innes when he was over at home; and I was glad to see him three days ago on his return and hear a bit from him about you. He will have given you more or less of what news there is to give of me, and made up a bit for my scandalous lack of letters. I

BERNARD IRELAND MACALPINE
A MEMOIRE OF 1914 - 19

hope you have had what I have deigned to send in the way of postcards. I've been getting your letters all right, but postal arrangements are rather upset here, just at the moment; so I don't know how long this will take to reach you.

I heard out here about Miss Brayshaw's(?) aunt being on the Arabic. Glad Mr. Hamilton escaped. I wonder if Fred Turner has reached home yet. Give him my love when you see him.

I am glad to hear that the F.O.R. Meeting went better than you feared. I sometimes feel I should like to get a chance of talking on the subject; but I shan't leave this work for it.

Well, you haven't had much account of what I've been doing since I came back here. I had a very enjoyable ten days or so at Bettancourt, with no great excitements. The Lucases are very nice and they have had quite a lot of children in the place, as well as a few grown-ups. As I have told you before, there are a number of children there from Rheims. They are most of them quite well, but their nerves are a good deal upset by the bombardments. One evening after they had gone to bed we had a rather bad thunderstorm, which considerably upset them; then the rain began to come in through the ceiling in their bedroom, which made another disturbance; then, after they had got them all quiet again the ceiling came down. The children thought it was a bomb and were terrified. I was out at the time with the doctor; but the others say they shrieked with terror, and were out of bed, some of them dressing, some of them on their knees.

Oct.6 I'm off tomorrow to Paris to help to conduct some of the children there Paris. They are clearing out fifteen from there to make way for some others from the crèche at Chalons; they have been heavily bombed there, so want their children out in a hurry. The Bettancourt children are being sent out when well enough to some Protestant holiday home in the centre of France. We start off with the fifteen at five o'clock tomorrow morning, Miss Connah and I in charge. We are going to sleep at Bettancourt space tonight. So I will post this in Paris.

Glad to have Hilda's letter today.

Much love to you both

B.

Mission Anglaise
Brabant le Roi
Meuse, France

BERNARD IRELAND MACALPINE
A MEMOIRE OF 1914 - 19

12th Oct. 1915

Dear Sirs,

Kindly supply me with the following for my Outland **Overland?** 5-seater car (1915):

Brushes for dynamo

Front left hand side curtain:

6 butterfly nuts for hood:

6 greasers for chackle **shackle** pins;

Please send these to me c/o Friends War Victims Relief Cttee, Ethelburga House, Bishopsgate St., London E.C., and, if you cannot send them all at once, please send what you can without waiting.

Yours truly

Bernard I. Macalpine.

Messrs. Overland Car Co.

P.S. Enclosed cheque for £2 ond.

Mission Anglaise

Brabant le Roi

Meuse

14;10;15

Sirs,

I enclose

- (1) 21 negatives (V.P.K.): please print twelve (12) Velox prints of each.
- (2) 1 negative: please print 2 velox prints;
- (3) 1 negative: please intensify: and print 2 Velox prints.
- (4) Cheque for £20 on account.

Yours truly

B.I.Macalpine

BERNARD IRELAND MACALPINE
A MEMOIRE OF 1914 - 19

Messrs. Kodak Ltd.

Paris

Mission Anglaise

Brabant le Roi

Meuse

14:10:15

Dear Miss Denham,

I see your letter was written exactly two months ago; so I fear the matter has gone beyond the possibility of apology – though I really am sorry to have treated you so shabbily.

My p.c. To you was written from home, where I had a pleasant and lazy holiday. I came back to find Nettancourt a thing of the past; the military had required our accommodation, and had turned us out. The building group had already hived off to set up house in Sommeilles. The workshop moved here, and also the doctor. I had a few days (ten days or a fortnight) at Bettancourt as chauffeur there, and then came on here, being replaced at Bettancourt by Steel.

My car at Nettancourt, or at any rate during the latter part of my time there, was busy very largely in taking Dr. Morland round; and fairly busy he kept it, an 80 mile round being not uncommon. Then he had a little two-seater with another chauffeur, and here I was at first nurses' chauffeur – partly for Nurse Hanna at Sermaize (she's beene **been** in charge of the hospital there) partly for Nurse Dunbar for this district.

Dr. Morland has left us for good, and is staying in England, We were expecting him back this month after a holiday, but now hear he is not coming. We had a Dr. Alber Wilson (rather a big bug in London, isn't he – he is in his own estimation) for three weeks, and I shuvved him round. He managed to tread on everyone's toes, upset and overworked the nurses by operations in the Sermaize hospital – he took a foot off a Rheims boy there – and incidentally made himself very interesting to his shuvver – now known in certain quarters as “the young doctor” - by making him general assistant; come to me if you want a child held while you cut its throat, or are short of a chloroformist.

The car haws **has** gone well, and completed twelve thousand miles or so. That's to say, it went well till a few days ago, when it met a cart in the dark, and as neither had any lights the radiator

BERNARD IRELAND MACALPINE A MEMOIRE OF 1914 - 19

was not improved. However, I hope to be on the road again tomorrow.

The car has done two pieces of work which may interest you. One of my photos shows a garderie which Miss Connah has been running with the small kids at Viller aux Vents. Miss Connah, by the way, is your successor in the front seat, only more so and even more furious (?). Well, we put the garderie in the car – 22 in all, including three adults – and brought it down here to Brabant, where we gave it a romp in a field and a feed in our hostess' backyard, and then took it back home.

The other interesting piece of work was just before I went home, and included a couple of runs to Rheims. One day I went to fetch a patient to the Chalons hospital . (Do you remember the Fêre Ch. Patient who wasn't for our Azili?). Next day, back to Rheims, whence I brought out two patients; one a damaged boy; the other a consumptive girl, whom I took home (to die, I'm afraid) the same day to a little little village just north of Ste Menehould. And in the whole of the two days I scarcely heard a gun.

I had another interesting interesting job last week, as assistant nursemaid nursemaid to Miss Connah, taking 18 Rheims children from Bettancourt to Paris in the train, en route for further south.

Well, I am sending you some photos at last; some you will recognise, others are of this part of the world, but may interest you as showing where you can move now.

I don't know that I've much gossip to give you. Tattus, alas, has left us, and is now, I believe, driving a car for the British naval air service. Lester, Jones, Pearson have joined the ambulance unit, and Stephens has been lent them for three months for civil work. Rigg and Tatlock are off on their own to Sumaria. Paul Cadbury is back with us after his time with the Nancy party. Probably you know that Ben Williams left us to enlist.

Now I must shut up and get to the car; so farewell, Jane; I hope you still enjoy your work (not too much of course, or you'll want to leave it) and are never frivolous.

Yours ever,

B.I.M

BERNARD IRELAND MACALPINE
A MEMOIRE OF 1914 - 19

Maison Anglais

Brabant-le-Roi

Meuse, France

15th Oct. 1915

My dear Auntie,

Your letter of the 10th came a day or two ago, and I think the one you wrote on the 3rd reached me after I wrote you last. I am glad to have news of Plato. Give him my love if you write.

We got our children safe to Paris the other day. It was the day before I finished my last letter that Miss Fry came over here to arrange with Miss Connah to take them. The next day, Wednesday, was occupied in making the arrangements. The only reasonable train, as we were **space** now travelling free and therefore third class, left Revigny at ten to six in the morning, as the only other possible train involved a wait of three hours at Chalons. So the **first** first difficulty was to get them from Bettancourt to the station. **For** For the last fortnight or three weeks we haven't been able to use our cars north of Revigny, that area having been temporarily closed to civilian cars for military reasons. (This stoppage made it rather awkward for us; we had to do **things** things with carts and cycles. Brabant is in the area which was closed, and so was Sommeilles and Villers aux Vents, where we have équipes.) Bettancourt is in the closed area (It's open again now, the prohibition being taken off last night), and it looked like having to start from **B** Bettancourt in a cart at four o'clock in the morning. So we went down to the Commandant at Revigny, who has been very obliging when ever we have had to deal with him, to ask him, to ask KZ if he could help us, by lending us either **military** military motor cars or a wagon with horses which would go a little faster than what we could get here. He was very obliging and telephoned up various places. Then it occurred to him to offer us a special pass if we borrowed the motor ambulances from an English Red Cross hospital which is near **R** Revigny (having moved there from Bar-le-Duc recently). So off I went to borrow them, and Miss Connah went to Bar le Duc to get the "requisition" from the Prefecture for our free tickets. I'm keeping the return half of it (which we didn't use as we came home on the express), requesting the railway to carry us **free** free as "évacuées, i.e. People evacuated from the military area. Then we went over to Bettancourt for the night, and found a message waiting for us to say that military wagons were coming for us at four in the morning from Rancourt. So off we went to Rancourt – which is the next village to Bettancourt, to see if this was some new arrangement or merely a mistake. Rancourt was mostly in bed and as there were three

BERNARD IRELAND MACALPINE A MEMOIRE OF 1914 - 19

regiments in the village we had rather an amusing hunt round and woke sundry people up before we got the right man, and found out that the mistake was merely the result of one of the Commandant's telephone messages which he had forgotten to cancel when we arranged for the cars.

So at 5 am we started out in the two ambulances and got into the train at Revigny, 15 children, Miss Connah and I. We had an uneventful journey to Paris, arriving in time though the train was 40 minutes late in starting. At Sermaize we took on another boy and a packet of clothes for each of the children to supplement what they had with them, so that most of the journey was taken up with sorting out and making up the parcels. At Paris we got a free meal – a pungent soup, sausage (? what informs) and macaroni – at a canteen they have opened there for people evacuated from their homes, after which Miss Connah went off to see about an omnibus, while I stayed with the children, and incidentally looked after a small boy whose free meal proved too much for him. Then we all set off in a motor charabanc, one that in peace time took Cook's tourists round Paris, and now is kept by the police for such work as this; went to the Hotel Britannique where we kept the children while arrangements were being made for putting them up for the night in a shelter which has been opened for the evacuated. Next day, Miss Connah and sundry ladies of the organisation which is looking after them took them off to the village on the Loire where they are living now in different houses, going to school and all the rest of it just like the rest of the village children, with a sort of superintendent and his wife living in the place to see that all goes well. Meantime I had a very pleasant day strolling round Paris, in the Bois de Boulogne, the Champs Elysees, and so on. Next morning I went round a few more places with Miss Connah, who has lived nearly all her life in Paris and made an excellent and exceedingly enthusiastic guide – and we came back home by the afternoon train.

Oct 30. Got your letter of the 24th yesterday, saying it is a fortnight since you heard from me. I'm sorry. This letter has been waiting half written for a long time.

We are getting the beginning of winter now. We've had several weeks of lovely autumn weather, and the colours have been extraordinarily fine – deep reds on the cherry trees, light yellow on the poplars, and every imaginable shade of brown mixed up in the woods. I've never seen anything quite like it in England.

I was glad to have Hilda's letter of Oct. 2, which I don't think I have acknowledged. I hope she has

BERNARD IRELAND MACALPINE
A MEMOIRE OF 1914 - 19

had a good holiday at Heald Green.

Glad to have news of the Fellowship meetings, and of your Polish Jews.

I'm sorry to hear that Uncle Willis has been so ill.

I'm not sure up to when I paid the self-assessment money, but I haven't paid up the Missionary money, to the end of the year. The BMS I paid up to August: the B.Z.M up to June. Probably I paid the Self Assessment up to the Sept. quarter. But in any case there will be another paper next quarter.

Thank you for sending the receipt for the Camp money, and for paying the cheque in.

I'm sorry I didn't send you word about the Sunday School Union. If you still have the letter, I think perhaps you might send them £1, and call it a donation.

Very much love, B.

Mission Anglaise,

Brabant le Roi

Meuse. France

30th Oct. 1815

My dear Auntie,

My letters have a habit of waiting half finished for a considerable time, so I have finished off one to make sure of getting it posted in Vitry this afternoon, when I go in to get my car out of the garage after a small repair.

However, there was one small piece of work – at **least** leasr it was work on the part of the car – that I meant to tell you about. I think I mentioned that Miss Connah is **running** tunnng a garderie at Villers aux Vents. You've **got** gor my photograph of the Crown Prince's dugout with the two small boys. They are René and Henri, **grandchildren** granchildren of the village shepherd, and the photo was taken the first day I was in Villers. I was waiting at the dugout while the authorities were discussing relief work in the village (Miss Connah was just beginning her work in the village), and got **H**henri, the younger of the two boys, on my shoulder, under the impressions I was amusing

BERNARD IRELAND MACALPINE A MEMOIRE OF 1914 - 19

him, when I found he was weeping. (By the way, I had him on my shoulder the other day so René, who wanted a ride himself, called out "He's afraid, he's going to cry!") So there was nothing for it but to give them both chocolate and a ride in the car. After that, Miss Connah discovered later, René, the elder of the two, spent his time, until the garderie began, at the top of the hill, watching for the car.

Well these two are two of an exceptionally nice set of children in the village. It's a small and most extraordinary village, the laughing-stock of the country round – and deservedly, for its quarrels, but including some very nice people, and a nicer set of children than the other villages seem to possess. The school is burnt and the schoolmaster mobilised. A new temporary school is just going to be put up and a new master coming. But meantime Miss Connah has had the children for the last two or three months. She's not allowed to teach them formally, not being qualified, but she does all sorts of kindergarten things, keeps them amused, and incidentally teaches them a lot, and starts their little ideas going. I think it was René who was busy drawing and suddenly took it into his head to draw the view in front of him through the window of the ruined school, with the main road and its row of trees on the ridge opposite. Just now he's got an insatiable passion for learning to write. And needless to say he's always ready for a car ride, in which accomplishment he is followed by the rest of the children. It's not often "le Monsieur's" car goes into the village **without** withoutt being met by a squealing crowd, sometimes waiting at the little bridge at the bottom of the hill, sometimes rushing down pell mell, sometimes up at the top. The other day some of them were running up and down on a little wooden handcart our building group up there have knocked together for carting odd planks about: René sat in front twiddling an imaginary steering wheel and shouting out "C'est moi qui suis Monsier Macalpine, (It's me that's Mr. Macalpine)"

Here are three photos: one of the car with a few of its patrons, and two of the garderie in the shanty where it was at first in the yard of the old school. When it got colder, it moved into our wooden houses which is finished but not yet occupied. (2135 The orchard at Villers-aux-Vents),

Well, soon after I came to Brabant we got the whole garderie into the car one afternoon, twenty two people in all, excluding three grown ups. Miss Connah, Balls (who's in the Village building group) and myself, and brought them down to Brabant, where we gave them a romp in a field (favourite game sitting on Balls and myself), and a feed in Madame Epinger's yard. Here where we live, and then back home in the car. (2134 The garderie.)

BERNARD IRELAND MACALPINE A MEMOIRE OF 1914 - 19

One more story about René. One day it was rather cold, and there wasn't yet a stove in the hut, so Miss Connah told the children they could go home if they were cold. So they succeeded for some time in not being cold. Then someone said "René's cold". René said he wasn't, but as he obviously was, Miss C sent him off. He got as far as the door and then the others said "René's crying". René, in between two sobs, affirmed that he wasn't crying. So Miss C. made him run about outside and then come back, when she put her coat on him, and said, "There now, you've got the star on your arm: you're just like M. Macalpine."

René's grandfather, as I said, is the old village shepherd. He used to take out all the sheep of the village, including some he had himself, and pasture them. Poor fellow, he was quite broken hearted when we first came along, with all the sheep lost. He wouldn't go elsewhere, though he was offered jobs, for he is famous for his good shepherding, and he'd got nothing to live for without his sheep. Miss Connah's been trying hard to get the people to buy sheep so that he can have them, and we are giving four of them wood and make sheep pens on the understanding that they will get some sheep. And now a little while ago, six rams were sent out from England, three of them from the King's flock at Sandringham, and one of the King's three has come to Villers. So the shepherd is cheery again, as there is to be a flock in the village.

Well, I didn't expect to finish a second letter today, but I may as well make up for my shortcomings. I'll hope to write again before long about a new bit of work I've got ahead for the next week or two.

You'll see from the Friend that 20 or so have left us for the Ambulance Unit hospital train.

Best love,

B.

Mission Anglaise,

Brabant le Roi

Meuse. France

30th Oct. 1915

Dear Sirs,

Please send me the following further replacement for my 1915 20/25 H.P. Outland

6 sparking plugs

set of push rod guide bushings for the 8 engine valves

BERNARD IRELAND MACALPINE
A MEMOIRE OF 1914 - 19

Kindly send as before c/o Friends War Victims Relief Cttee., Ethelberga House, Bishopsgate St., London E.C.

Yours truly

B.I.Macalpine,

Willys Overland Ltd.

P.S. I am never able to make any use of your patent rims to facilitate putting on new tyres. I have noticed somewhat similar rims on another car, which was provided with a special tool for pulling in the ends of the rims and holding them while putting on the tyre. Have you a similar tool? If so, please send me one.

Arcis-sur-Aube

France.

8th Nov. 1915

My dear Auntie,

Many thanks to you both for your birthday letters and good wishes, which arrived on the 5th, I think.

Please tell Hilda that I have had the French book belonging to the gramophone with me out here. I have left it to be taken over by the first person crossing and posted to her. I have finished with it for myself.

I told you in my last letter that I had a new piece of work ahead. It arose in this way. Miss Connah came home from a relief workers meeting at Sermaize and reported that the work was coming to an end in our district, and that some of them would probably have to be dispensed with for the winter. The question had been raised of doing relief work further south among the refugees there. Up to the present we have confined ourselves to the district actually overrun by the Germans. The authorities were disinclined to go further south, where the need might or might not be great but was not likely to be so urgent as it was at the beginning in the devastated areas; and one of their chief reasons seemed to be financial, they feeling that the supply of money being more or less limited it would be better to spend it in other ways later on, when the invaded territory is clear and the people go back to their homes. Miss Connah and Trew and I talked it over, and we all felt that it was a pity that the work should be neglected if it was needed, as we thought likely; so I conceived a scheme whereby I should provide the money, up to say a couple of thousand pounds, and they should let three or four of us go off on a semi-independent expedition and undertake the work,

BERNARD IRELAND MACALPINE A MEMOIRE OF 1914 - 19

going from place to place and holding ourselves ready to come back whenever Committee wanted us for other work further north; meantime giving out what we found necessary in the way of blankets, stuff for making winter clothing, and so on. I suggested the scheme, through Miss Fry, to the executive here. The executive didn't like the idea of a semi-independent expedition (which I only proposed because I thought anything else was impossible) and said it must either be either fully controlled by them or entirely ? Funded; were, as I've said, not prepared to do the work themselves from their own funds; but apparently didn't consider what they would do if offered the funds for that work to be done by themselves. So after considering the matter further, I told the Committee that I didn't feel I had enough information to justify me in doing the thing on my own account against their judgement, but that on the other hand I didn't feel that they had sufficient information to make me accept their decision; so I suggested that an experiment should be made to see if the work is worth undertaking and spending money on. The upshot was that Miss Connah, Miss Day (who has been working at Bar le Duc) and I were commissioned to go off with my car on a week or ten days tour of inspection in the district of Troyes and St. Dizier, and here we are at the end of our first day's enquiry.

We started out from Vitry this morning, through Glarmes and Huiron, where we have done building work, and struck south west, through country which **reminded** remindad me of the Fêre Chapenoise District, to Ramerupt, where we began enquiring. We saw the Maire, the schoolmaster, the curé; but they were all **agreed** agreed that while the refugees would be glad to take anything we gave them, there was no real need; they were all employed on the farms, and all had the allocation, the government grant to refugees. So we came on to Arcis sur Aube, the chief town of one of the four or five **arrondissements** which make up the Department of the Aube.

Here we went first to the Sub Prefect who gave us a list of villages in the **arrondissement** where refugees are most numerous. We hope to visit most of them tomorrow.

Then we saw the Adjoint or Deputy mayor, in the absence of the Mayor, who told us there are 500 or 600 refugees in the town, but they have now got decent housing and bedding, and work, and not much help is needed. He sent us on to the Secretary of the Mairie, who didn't take such a rosy view, especially on the subject of work. Those who have gone out to the villages have got work on the farms, though a good deal of that may stop for the winter. But in Arcis itself work is more difficult to get. The factories (they make fine quality woven goods for the best Paris shops) are mostly closed for want of men to look after the machines, and the women who worked there have

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many of them had to leave the town to go to Troyes. Refugees are constantly coming in now, as they are repatriated from the parts in German hands.

The Secretary sent us on to mademoiselle Clergé, who has helped the refugees a lot. She is by no means of the opinion that our work is not needed. We hope to see more of her and some of the refugees.

Best love

B.

Ancis-sur-Aube

France

9th Nov. 1915

My dear Auntie,

We are back here for another night, at the end of our second day's exploration.

If you look at the map you will see that the Aube valley runs west from here, with a line of villages on each side of it. Our plan this morning was to visit some of the villages along this valley, which had been mentioned to us by the Sub-Prefect. Accordingly, we set off to Villette, a couple of miles out along the southern road, dropped Miss Connah there while I ran Miss Day on to Pouan in the next valley. I left her there and rejoined Miss Connah at Villette, where I found her talking to an intelligent and sympathetic schoolmistress (she had been shown the way to the schoolhouse by a boy who came from Fêre Champenoise and recognised our badge). Most of the refugees there are well off, but the schoolmistress told us of three needy cases. Two we visited, and found them quite well housed but distinctly in need of clothes. The third is a girl of twelve, whose father and mother have died during the war. She lives with some people in the village, and gets the usual "allocation" for a child refugee, i.e. 50 centimes (5d.) a day. This is not enough to pay for her keep, and has to be supplemented by her sister, aged 16, who works at an ironmonger's in Arcis, (we hope to see her tomorrow) and leaves nothing for clothes. We think of trying to get her taken over by an Anglo French organisation which is looking after orphans of the war, sending them to Chateaux up and down the country, where they are looked after and educated by Sisters. There is also a brother living somewhere in the Marne, where exactly we don't yet know.

At Pouan Miss Day found there was apparently no need so we passed on to Plancy, on the north side of the river. We got a list of refugees from the Maire's secretary, saw the Curé

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(who has been in **M** manchester) and a lady who looks after the refugees, and visited several cases. Here again the need does not seem great. They are decently housed, though some could do with more clothes.

We lunched at Boulages, a little further along the same road, and as we had been told in the course of the morning that there were a lot of refugees there, we made enquiries, but didn't find any need of help.

Then we struck south to Méry-sur-Seine, where Miss Day made enquiries, without finding a great deal of distress. Meanwhile I ran Miss Connah on to Chêrtres, where she wanted to call on the wife of a soldier she had met at Laheycourt, one of **space** our villages near Brabant-le-Roi. She had heard from her husband that Miss Connah might be coming, and was naturally glad to see us and get news of her husband. We got three or four names here of refugees who **space** might be in need, but had no time to spare for them.

After picking up Miss Day we went on to Romilly-sur-Seine. We had not originally intended to go so far west, but the curé at Plancy had told us there were a great many refugees there, and all indications seemed to **space** point to the need being in the town rather than the villages, so we went on there. Romilly is a good sized place, and an important railway centre. We first of all saw the Maire. He tells us there are 1800 refugees in the town. A good many are railway employees, moved here by the Railway Company from the invaded areas, and receiving there the wage of 5 francs a day in place of the free housing they had in the company's houses before. This last the Maire thinks a mistake, as it gives them too much money to drink, and it might be better have been saved up and given them on their return home to help start them again at home. Anyway, they are well off. The other refugees are by no means so well off.

There are two Committees of other refugees, one of those from the Marne, and the other of those from the Ardennes. We got the names of the two secretaries from the Maire, and went to see one of them, M. Morea, a refugee from **m** Rheims himself, and secretary of the Marne Committee. We hadn't much time, but heard enough to decide us to go back tomorrow after we had finished Arcis, instead of going straight on to Troyes. We couldn't do Arcis today, as Mlle.Clergé, the lady I mentioned who is to show us around, has just lost her brother, and the funeral was today. All the refugees have clubbed together and sent her a wreath. Tryes - 10th Nov.

This morning I left the ladies to do the visiting in Arcis and ran back to Dampierre, a village we had

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passed through on our first day, but had since heard mentioned once or twice as needing help. It turned out much like the other villages, with no very great **sing??** if need, but I found one case of a family with six children living in one room with very scanty bedding.

I came back to lunch at Arcis, and found the ladies had done their visiting, and reported that there is little real distress; though **there** certainly would have been but for what Mlle. Clergé had done, especially as regards bedding.

We had intended to go on to Romilly this afternoon, but I found it impossible to get any petrol, so we came straight here, hoping to buy some here, or **if** of not, to see if we could persuade the military depot to give us some, failing which I should have just enough to run home to Vitry, and the rest of the tour would have been done by train. I managed to get some, with some difficulty.

Here, we first saw the Prefect and his wife, who gave us quite a rosy account of what they were doing to meet the needs of the 20,000 refugees in the Department, but said there is a great deal of need in **Troyes**. Then we went to the Refugee Bureau and saw the director. There are 4000 or 5000 of the refugees in Troyes, a good many badly housed, and there is likely to be a good deal of distress both among them and among the poor of the town. Work is hard to get and there is danger of a coal famine.

The Bureau has had a sum of 28,000 francs to spend; which, among 20,000 refugees, works out at ½ per person.

We looked in on a couple of families, one of 9 persons, the other of 5, housed free by the town in the tumble down old house where the bureau is. They have each two very tiny rooms and live and in the one case, sleep in one small double bed.

Tomorrow we intend to finish here and go on to Romilly and Nogent sur Seine by train, returning here the next night; then on elsewhere by car.

Romolly Nov 11

Spent the morning visiting in Troyes and found some pretty bad cases.

Miss Connah and I went to a dilapidated old house belonging to the town, the ground floor of which

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is used as a temporary shelter for refugees arriving in the town, but there are several people who have **got** gor more or less permanently installed there. This was the worst place we saw, with no means of heating, and absolutely nothing in the rooms but sacks of straw to sleep on and blankets. In one room was a woman with three children, a Belgian woman whose child had been taken to hospital because the place was too cold to nurse it in, and an old woman just arrived from Rheims. These people possessed three bowls. Next to her were two small rooms with two old men in and nothing else but the same apology for bedding. One of them is too old to work; the other apparently hasn't enough **gumption** gumtion to find it; otherwise he could probably get it, being a farm labourer, in the villages. These two get their food for a franc a day at a sort of soup kitchen, leaving them 25c (21/2d) a day for clothing and everything else, from their allocation.

From there I went on to another old house where there are fourteen families. I saw three, each in a small room with a sort of alcove or dressing room at the end, just large enough to put beds in. |They were all very decent, nice folk. Downstairs was a family of six, all sleeping on straw palliasses on the **above?** alsove floor. They gave me coffee. Above them was a Belgian woman, with two daughters who had been in America and spoke a little English. In the room above when I went in I thought the mother must have gone out and left the **little** littlr children in charge of their sister, who was quite small and looked about 16. However, she turned out to be the mother of two of them, the third being an orphan they had taken in. The father is here with them, and works on the trains (trams?), so they are not so badly off as they might be. They are Belgians, and had walked all the way. The baby was born there in **Troyes**Tryes, and they had bought and borrowed a little decent bedding for the occasion. Otherwise they had not much furniture, but the place was as neat and clean as it could be.

Meantime, the ladies were visiting other places. Miss Day found one big room with 14 people (4 families) and 2 dogs in it. Both of them found women making sacks to serve as sandbags for the troops. They get old sacks, which have to be mended, and cut down or patched together to make the right size. They get 10 cm. for 50 sacks, and out of that have to pay 31/2 for the thread; and two of them working together at the highest pressure can do 25 sacks in a day.

In the afternoon we spent a little time sightseeing. Troyes is a very interesting place, with old streets, and fine old churches, not to mention a famous cathedral.

We had intended coming on here by train, to save petrol. But there was a difficulty in getting the

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necessary safe conduct in time, as, having found a little petrol at a large price, and hearing that there was more to be had here (which I hope may prove true), we came on in the car this evening.

Much love,

B.

address for time being Hotel Biet, Paris.

Mission Anglais

Brabant-le-Roi

Meuse, France

21st Nov.1915

Dear Mr. Hildick,

I enclose cheque for £6-14-10 in **settlement** of your account.

I am expecting next week to take up a new piece of work here, which I am financing myself. I shall be probably draw a cheque for £50 towards the end of this week, and if the work – relief work among the refugees in the town of Troyes – **develops** developes on a large scale I may want anything up to £2000 in the course of the winter. Probably, however, we shall only be there a few weeks at the work: in which case the money required will be considerably less, but it will be needed soon.

I shall be glad if you will kindly take whatever steps may be necessary, firstly, to make sure that my balance at the Bank **is sufficient** insufficient to meet the cheque of £50 at once and secondly to make it possible for me to have whatever further money I may need. I take it that the simplest way will be to arrange with the Bank to allow me to overdraw to whatever extent may be necessary, up to the £2000. Will there be any difficulty in arranging this?

I should not wish, even if there was ? To put any of my mortgagors to inconvenience by calling in the mortgages; but if any happen to be wishing to ripen(?), it might be as well to open a deposit account for me up to £2000.

However Hoever, I shall be glad if you will do whatever seems best to you, in conjunction with Miss Ireland, who has my power of attorney, should it be needed, and whom you will no doubt keep informed of anything that is done.

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I expect to draw the money by cheque to on Cain's **Treasurer** reasurer Mr. Arnold Elliott.

Yours faithfully, B.I.Macalpine.

Mission Anglaise

Brabantle Roi

Meuse 21st Nov.1915

Dear Elliott,

A scratch (?) on Thursday agreed to send three or four people for a short time to Troyes to undertake work as the result of our **space** tour to report and on the basis of my offer of finance.

I take it the simplest way to arrange the finance will be for me to give you cheques from time to time as the money is needed, and for you to pay me the cost either direct or through the Sec. At Vitry. The cheques can then go down as subscriptions per me, and the cash as payments in the ordinary way.

Miss Fry is sending me with the party and talks of us leaving on Saturday. Can you be ready to cash me a cheque for £50 on Thursday at Committee.

Yrs sincerely

B.I.Macalpine.

PS I am getting my letters addressed to Hotel Britannique for the period.

Mission Anglaise

Brabant-le-Roi

Meuse. France

21st Nov.1915

My dear Auntie,

We got back from our tour last Monday, and I meant to have finished my account of it before now. I found your letter of the 6th waiting for me here and was glad to have it. Please don't be disturbed at having forgotten my birthday, I got your letter of Oct.29, along with Hilda's, on the day after my birthday, and took it that it to be a birthday letter, only I mildly wondered why you had forgotten to mention the fact.

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I hope Hilda has got the French book for the gramophone by this time. I was interested to hear of one of our nurses coming to Chalons. What is her name? You ask about the Villers children. René is seven and Henri space four. The whole twenty two of us got into the car at once (or on to it). I may sound impossible, but it happened. I must send you a photo of it when I can get one for you. One of the Villers men took one.

Glad to have your letter of the 14th too.

My last letter finished at Romilly on the 11th. On the 12th, while I bought petrol and attended to the car, the ladies went visiting. Miss Connah went round some of the emigrés (emigré means refugee) of the Marne, with Madame Moreau, wife of the secretary of the Marnais committee. Last year, Madame Moreau told us, the ladies of the town met every afternoon to sew first for the soldiers, then for the refugees. This year the soldiers there are well enough clothed and there is only enough interest left to keep the meeting going once a week. But Madame thinks she can get the use of the room and the machines and make over old clothes if she could have them, so we hope we may be able to get her some of the misfits from our bales.

Miss Connah saw several cases with Mme Me. Moreau, and found them hard up for clothes, but not quite so badly off as those in Troyes. There was one family of two grownups and 5 children, living in a room about 8x14 feet, where there is so little room that the children have either to play in the street or go to bed. Meanwhile Miss Day was trying to find out about the refugees from the Aube. But their committee showed every sign of being in the middle of a quarrel. The secretary said he had just been appointed and referred her to the president. The President said he had resigned and the Secretary had all the papers. So we didn't get much out of them, but we gathered that the Ardennes people are not too badly off in general.

From Romilly we went on to Nogent-sur-Seine and called on the way at a village called Crancy to see a case that had been mentioned by M. Moreau. It was a consumptive man, living in a bad house, with window panes missing and so on, with his wife and two children, a girl of 11 and a boy of 4. The father, whom we saw, in an advanced stage of the disease, and the neighbours say the mother is beginning with it. The girl sleeps out with neighbours, but the boy sleeps with his parents, on a bed which consists of straw palliases laid on straw. Furniture and clothes were both short.

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Nogent-sur-Seine was the second of the four Sub Prefectures of the department that we visited. We saw the Secretary of the Sub-Prefecture, and the Secretary of the Maire. There are about 90 refugee families, and there is a need for clothes, but otherwise they are not too badly off. There is plenty plenty of work, and a sugar factory there has had to send elsewhere for refugees to make up the number(?) of its hands habds. This will stop for the season in February, but the refugees hope to be allowed to stay on in the rooms where the factory has put them up, and the town hopes to find other work for them.

We only saw one really bad case. Here the father was a widower widdower, and a shepherd. The two eldest boys work and live at a farm. The other three are with him in two small rooms very cery badly kept by the eldest girl, aged 14 – a great big girl who looks more like 18. We may be able to get the two small children taken over by the Franco American committee of if whom I told you in connection with the orphan girl at Villette.

From Nogant Nogent we ran back to Troyes – losing our way and getting round riund in the dark by Mancilly-le-Hayes instead of Romilly – and we spent the next morning shopping in Troyes. We sent a parcel of warm clothes to the consumptive family at Crancy, and the other things to two or three of the village cases. We didn't do anything for Troyes, as we didn't know whether we might not come back and work in it.

You may remember that I told you about taking a soldier home in my car from Nettancourt. He had 48 hours leave or so and it was the only way he could get home and see his wife and little girl; and when I got him home he insisted on paying me 20 francs, so I spent it there to send a bed to M. and Me Moreau at Romilly for their little girl; they can't afford aford to buy one and have been hiring. Then you may remember that when I got the 20 francs the postman of the village, when he heard about our work, gave me 50c. This I spent on some little toys for the small girl to go with the bed; these included some tiny plates, on which she insisted on having her supper – so we hear in a letter of thanks just to hand.

From Troyes we went on to the two remaining sub-Prefectures of the Department, Bar-sur-Seine and Bar-sur-Aube, spending the night at the latter. We didn't spend long at Bar-sur-Seine; saw the Maire and the Sub-Prefect's secretary and visited two or three cases, but there didn't seem much sign of serious need.

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At Bar-sur-Aube, on Sunday, we saw the Sub Prefect, a somewhat stout and voluble gentleman with a number of grievances about the Prefect and the military, which he poured out to us without a great deal of information about refugees. He told us one rather amusing thing. The departments of the Marne and the Aube are the part of the world where Champagne comes from. Now the really first class champagne comes from the northern part, and a few years ago that part got a law passed entitling them to call their champagne first class and making the others label theirs as from the **space** second grade area. Whereat there were violent riots in the second class area, especially **in** I Bar sur Aube and the neighbourhood. The result has been so strong a feeling that the refugees from the Marne have been chased out of the Bar sur Aube district.

It was the same there as in the other smaller places, a few cases of need but no great distress. From there we went on, over the hills and through the woods in a snowstorm, to Wassy, one of the Sub-Prefectures of the next department, the Haute Marne. You'll find it on your map, somewhere south of Sermaize.

In the Haute Marne there are 10,000 refugees of whom 8000 are in the arrondissement of Wassy. We soon found there was no great need except in St. Dizier, which is a fair sized industrial town and very crowded with soldiers and refugees. But here, so different from the Aube, there is a really good administration, doing all it can for the refugees and doing it well. We first of all at Wassy saw the Maire. Then the Sub prefect's secretary. The Sub Prefect was away in St Dizier looking into things for the refugees, and before he came back his secretary gave us any amount of information, showing us among other things one of the Sub Prefect's letters which was waiting to be signed, in which he was telling some official all that had been done for the refugees. Then the subprefect came in, and made an eloquent speech to us on the needs of his emigrés, asking us to help with clothes if we wanted to but preferably with beds.

We went on for the night to St Dizier, and spent the next morning going round the worst cases under the guidance of the man at the **mairie** amirie who is in charge of the refugee work, and is a refugee himself. Housing conditions were pretty bad, and a lot we saw were without beds, but the officials were busy at the moment providing beds for all who were without. We felt there was a considerable deal of need, but that it is being well and thoroughly dealt with. Here as in **T**troyes the numbers are considerably increased by the fact that people are being sent by the Germans from the invaded territory via Switzerland, and are coming **space** up here to join their families who are here already or to be as near their homes as possible, ready to move up **space** when they get

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a chance.

St. Dizier finished our tour, and we ran up from there to Sermaize.

On Thursday we met the executive and reported. There were two or three difficulties raised about taking up work in **Troyes**. For one thing, since the scheme started new work has come up in Salonika where several of our people are going and a lot of money will be needed. Then it was felt that the town of Troyes ought to be looking after the refugees itself, and we don't want to spend time and money saving the French people from doing what they can and ought to do. However the best way to stir them up seems to be to go and do something ourselves, so it is settled that three or four of us are to go for about three weeks and make a more or less limited distribution of clothes.

Probably we shall go on Saturday, so as to be back here for Christmas.

As I told you, I am providing the money. I don't know how much it will come to, but I have written Mr. Hilditch asking him to make arrangements so that I can draw what I need. He will no doubt see you about it.

Best love

B.

P.S Letters for the moment might be addressed to
Hotel Britannique, Avenue Victoria
Paris,
They will be forwarded from there.

(Transcriber's note: The next letter to Miss Ireland (dear Auntie) is dated 16th January 1916, and starts a new note-book. The letter implies that BIM had been across to England for a break, around New Year. The last entry is a letter dated 4th July 1916.

In a separate notebook, the copies of reports to the Committee include a Report of Emigré Relief Work at Troyes: Dec. 1915; and Report of Emigré Relief Work at Troyes Dec. 1915 – Mar. 1916. This notebook also has records of BIM's expenditure; he was funding the work around Troyes himself.

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These reports, but not the accounts, I am putting in a separate file. It is noticeable that the descriptions of the state of refugees is, understandably, realistic, rather than the version written to dear Auntie)