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**Letter from Ceylon Kingston to his mother, dated February 22,  
1919**

Ceylon S. Kingston

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Thisancourt Vages, Feb 22, 1919

My dear Mother:

Well I have received three letters from you now. The last came Tuesday and had been written Jan 22. I think the letters are attended to but everybody complains about packages. However as the French say C' est le Guerre (It is the war).

I suppose you feel the pinch of high prices in the states but it is worse over here. Kerosene costs 80 centimes a litre which in U.S. money at present rate of exchange (5.45) makes it cost about 70 cents a gallon. I saw an American soldier Saturday night at Neufchateau who evidently was hungry for apples buy two rater nice looking apples. They were carefully weighed out and cost him 3 $\frac{1}{2}$  francs a dozen. Butter is 5 to 6 francs a pound and very hard to get. The only time I eat butter is when I go to Neufchateau and at the Y.M.C.A. Mess eat butter brought from America. At the commissary we can buy some things cheaper than in America. For example a Gillette safety razor that costs \$5.00 in America can be bought for \$1.35. A pair of shoes that would cost \$6.00 to \$7.00 can be bought for \$4.25.

I went to Neufchateau Saturday and stayed over night. It is difficult to get a room in a hotel. I had one in a private house for which I paid 5 francs. In the morning I walked out to Domremy which is 10 kilometres from Neufchateau. Domremy is the birthplace of John of Arc and the old house in which she lived 500 years ago has been carefully preserved. Thousands of people visit it every year. A little distance away is the old church which stood there in her day. I went in and listened to the service. The cure' recited Mass and then preached a short sermon about 15 or 20 minutes long. It was a forceful discourse on the practical Christian virtues. But it was very cold in the church. There was no fire and the Priest's breath froze in the frosty air with every word. There was a reasonably good audience who seemed to take the frigid atmosphere as a matter of course.

When I went back to Neufchateau the road was full most of the way with French troops — mostly artillery. There is a vast amount of movement now, made necessary by the present situation.

I expect our boys here will be ordered away in a short time. Just when no one here knows. I have a feeling that until Germany signs the peace treaty and things quiet down in Europe not many of the American effectives will go home. The Allies will take no chances. Germany must take her medicine, the boundaries of the new countries must be settled, and everybody must agree to settle down and be good. The Russian situation is the most perplexing matter now as it seems to me.

Saturday I expect to go to Nancy with Lieutenant Clemang. Just outside of Nancy was fought in September 1914

the battle of the Grand Curonne' which was a part of the Great Battle of the Marne. Nancy is the largest town in Northeastern France with a population of 125000.

In March I am entitled to 10 days leave with expenses allowance and transportation furnished. I will go down to the South of France (Toulouse) as they are not granting permits to spend leave periods in the fighting zone.

Speaking of living expenses I have been at the soldiers' kitchen today with the commandante. The daily cost of feeding a soldier is  $4\frac{1}{2}$  francs a day. Swiss cheese which resembles American cheese cost the commissary 9 francs a kilogram. A kilogram is  $2\frac{1}{5}$  pounds. That means 73 cents a pound in our money. At the officers mess it costs a little less than 6 francs a day for two meals and a cup of coffee in the morning.

Affectionately,  
Ceylon