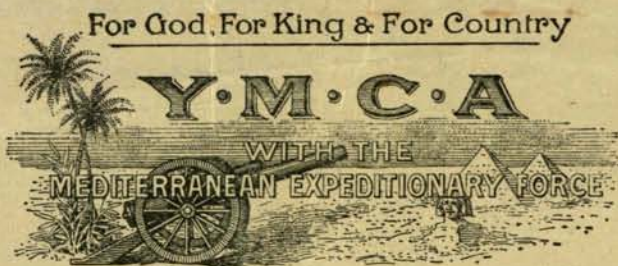


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AND  
THE NEAR EAST.

CHAIRMAN  
H. E. SIR HENRY  
MCMAHON.

Reply to No. \_\_\_\_\_ Coy. \_\_\_\_\_ Bat. \_\_\_\_\_

23 January

Stationed at Ras-el-Tin  
Alexandria

My dearest Hazel,

I got two letters from you yesterday - the one you wrote at Fairbairn's after the exams. and another on Dec. 14<sup>th</sup>. I am so glad you have been good friends with Miss Eileen Fairbairn <sup>last</sup> this year: I like her very much, - better than another friend of yours whom we have discussed before, Miss Harvey. Yet I believe my dislike for her simply arose out of ~~my~~ her dislike for me, otherwise I would not have bothered to dislike her.

You certainly seem to have



had shocking good luck in the exams. I hate to think of anybody fluking through who doesn't deserve it (my conscience hurts whenever I think of my own first-class); and if I were to accept your own version of your deserts, I would be reluctantly obliged to wish you a failure - but I don't. I have my own unbiassed opinion of you, and I know that you deserve the best of success. I am not enthusiastic about your applying for teaching positions; I thought it was settled that you were to stay at home. However, if you must or if you wish it, I hope you have got the position at Nelson. I am sure you would like the town and college and the staff - from what I know of them - especially Miss Saxon.

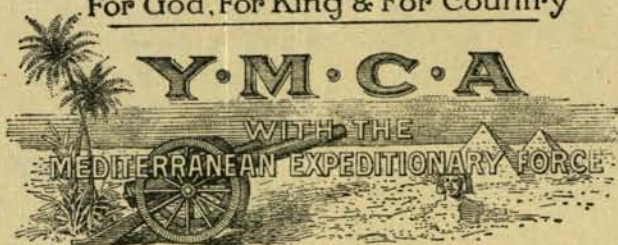
I have to thank you for several tins of chocolate, the mittens and the writing-case, all of which I received together. The writing-case is a particularly



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sensible and useful present, and will be no trouble at all to pack in my valise. I am afraid the cakes your Mother sent must be given up for lost - its a scandalous shame - and the Virol toffee has not arrived yet - but it is hardly due yet. Of course now we are in Egypt we don't need these things so much, and the disappointment is nothing to me, but I do feel extremely annoyed to think that your mother's kindness should be wasted on some contemptible sneak in a soft job at the base.

I don't quite remember what was in my letter of Aug. 20, which was so badly treated by the censor,



but I must have said too much about the fighting of the previous week, and I think I told the circumstances of Jack Mansell's death.

You will be nearing the end of your stay at Haritane now. I also have been having a quiet holiday for very much the same period, but very likely all you know at present is that I am ill, and you will perhaps be anxious, instead of wishing me luck in the first proper rest and holiday I have had since the war began. I wish the authorities wouldn't send those foolish cables except in serious cases. I am still reading heavily - Life of Gladstone, one vol. of Gibbon's Decline and Fall, Tennyson's early poems, "Césaire Dupin" in French, and the best part of two days learning Italian from a phrase-book - that has been the week's programme, besides magazines and some delightful fiction. It



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is just like college over again - nothing to do all day but follow one's own sweet will. Besides, I am getting leave three or four days a week, thanks to the dentist making a very slow job of my teeth. The sights of the town are soon exhausted - that is, the places to go and see. There are only the gardens, which are very ordinary, the Museum and Catacombs (which are closed), and Pompeii's Pillar, Phartoun monument etc, which don't take long to look at. But of course any big, busy town has a certain interest, and I never miss a chance to get out on leave. My friend Farquhar was discharged on Thursday, and I went out alone next day, but soon made



an interesting acquaintance, the manager of the American Cosmograph. He is a Frenchman, the soul of good nature, enthusiasm and eloquence, and he entertained me delightfully all the afternoon. I incidentally had that one long talk improved my understanding of spoken French immensely. On leaving me he gave me a card for two seats at his pictures, so I picked up an acquaintance and went in the evening. It was an absolutely tip-top programme.

Another friend I have made is the chaplain here - a kind, simple, jolly old man, who has been nineteen years a missionary in Turkey. He is one of the most lovable men I have ever met.

I am getting to pretty good health now, but expect to stay another week - just for luck. Must close now: the dinner-rush is on.

With much love to you, dearest  
from  
Becil.